

African architecture

Design



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City Planning in Africa

In 2012, there was a group of African mayors and top leaders congregated in Lagos Nigeria with a theme to deliberate on the African urban transformation. This meeting was particularly undertaken by individuals and parties involved in designing, planning, managing and financing of the African most innovative cities. The keynote speakers in this meeting were world-class authorities responsible for urban planning, housing, infrastructure, energy, and architecture. From the outcomes of these ventures, it has become very essential for the adoption of an innovative city planning and design mechanism as the Main Street design prescribed for Kpone City.

In the latter meeting, there were certain observers who subscribed to the idea that there was no need to meet and deliberate on the obvious results where developers develop autonomous urban projects around pre-existing mega cities. For instance, from the perspective of regional city developments, there was case examples of the Eko Atlantic based on the Victoria Island of Lagos city to the most cherished Tatu city on the outskirts of Nairobi City in Kenya to the eastern region of Africa. Indeed, there has been budding of new cities at a significantly steady pace beginning from attempts to replicate one of the renowned designs set up in South Africa's Johannesburg about two and a half decades ago.

In this regard, while Kpone is located in Ghana and credited to be one of the perceived hubs of city growth, Ghana has ventured into this new rush for development of cities. The Kpone-Appolonia and King City are one of the

recent robust urban developments in the country. Those individuals purporting to support the city development refer to the two championed cities as the ‘Africa’s cities of Future’. In essence, the new cities Kpone-Appolonia and King City marks an establishment of a novel milestone in the urban planning in Ghana, Africa. The Renaissance Group who encompasses the Moscow-based investors credited with the Kpone City Project also purchased an extension of 1000 hectares of land adjacent to Takoradi as well as an additional 800 hectares between Appolonia and Oyibi towns, the larger Accra city region.

Modern African Architecture

In the development of these projects, there was involvement of numerous individuals comprising of professional designers factoring different elements in the determination of the choice of designs and other approaches to expansion of the city’s scopes as far as the supply of social amenities is concerned. Some of the professionals involved include the land surveyors, environmentalists, cultural specialists and engineers among others. A significant amount of time was also spent in the analysis in order to gather the requisite information pertaining to different planning areas and surrounding regions. The entire information gathered was manipulated in informing the best designs of the city. In order to enhance city design development, designers ensured that the city ecology, geography and culture were factored into the production of suitable and mixed-use categories of towns.

In order to enhance city planning and design mechanism, the city residents and the society at large must consider the philosophical and psychological

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impacts of city designs and its influence on the people's way of lives. The choice of a given urban design must be based on its effect on the community both in the short-run and in the long-run. The consideration given to the city architecture may however be framed with moderation from the international acclaimed standards based on foreseeable benefits in future. For instance, the climatic impact of city architecture is very essential as it does not only influence the city population in particular but also the neighborhoods in general. City pollution is a product of different architectural designs while robust flow of traffic influences the comfort of individuals due to insurgence of bad air transfusion in the city space and its surrounding. Eventually, this notion may adversely influence the philosophical and psychological attributes of a city.

Despite understanding of the important elements associated with the development of cities, there are certain critical considerations in the prospects of considering a holistic lifestyle within a world-class modern city. City development is also intended to create sustainable neighborhood that are not only attractive but also safe and convenient to live in. The development of African cities has been precipitated by different changes in the urban setups as well as influence of globalization which has led to changes in architectural designs. African cities have realized rapid population growth which has largely overtaken good planning, engineering services and land use management manipulated by ever-swelling population.

City and Regional Planning

There has been a glaring demand for high quality city management aimed at providing free movement within cities and their suburbs. One of the main

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approaches that city management experts have subscribed to, is the adoption of satellite cities in order to relieve the prevailing congestion in major cities like Accra. This process is mainly achieved through development of multi-nodal cities in which all movements are focused on different urban node. From the latter advances, traffic movements in the city are redirected. Besides, there are additional benefits achieved from this development including engineering services that can be easily installed within the city. Additionally, the process also encompasses achievement of high quality development within a planned environment. Nevertheless, these satellite cities are required to be established in integrated environments that does not only provide residential capacities but also employs residents, offer social, educational, business and recreational services. In essence, the development of housing of the so-called satellite locations is at times credited with worsening the city residential situation since more people are forced to drive longer distances to the central economic zone. This situation is the glaring reality at Kpone City on the outskirts of Accra City, Ghana.

While city development are geared towards easing business operations in the capital, new advances are developed alongside the provisions of the Ghana National Urban Policy's methodology of stimulating a decentralized development across major urban centers towards relieving the city against congestion in the long-run as a result of swelling population. Although these advances have been undertaken, a significant mechanism for resolving congestion challenge is yet to be accomplished fully. In previous decade, there have been numerous foreign investors to Ghana intending to exploit clear opportunities in the gold mining sectors among other resources that

the country boasts about. City environment has been the prime destination of these investors before advancing to the physical mining sectors.

With regard to the current economic health of Ghana, there has been rapid urbanization coupled with high growth of middle class, an aspect that has further stimulated an interesting arena for both property and land developments. Inadequate supply and scale of demand are essential to the success achieved from Kpone project among other city development mechanisms. The development of modern cities is anchored on pure determination, courage as well as adventure in order to create new modern cities. According to the head of African real estate development at the Renaissance Group, Arnold Meyer, the development of modern cities in Africa is not a preserve of few exceptional characters of foreign entities but can be done courtesy of the native initiative and zeal to grow.

Landscape and Urban Planning

The development of Kpone City among other modern cities, has been credited with creating a multi-billion projection and business hubs for their countries. Among the main features characterizing the cities on completion include shops, offices, residential houses as well as parks that will further stimulate native economies. In this regard, Ghana is bound to reap immensely from the project although there is a major demand for enhanced outcomes of the projects among them with determination of innovative projects that constitutes city planning such as the Main Street projection.

After completion, Kpone City is expected to contribute the biggest share of the anticipated 180, 000 new residents spread across approximately 50, 000

housing units. In particular, Kpone anticipates tapping 88, 000 visitors and residents who will contribute immensely to the regional commercial and industrial advancements via enhanced tourism activities with robust recreational and social facilities. New settlements in the city will be based on a concept of work-live-play. In effect, this process culminates into the achievement of mixed land use in order to cater for the needs of all residents and visiting parties. Besides, the development will also promote public transportation and non-motorized forms in the intra-urban movements. In the face of city planning and advancements in Africa, professionals also provide that city development mechanisms should be geared towards realizing new standards of African Urban Planning.

The development of Kpone City is mainly linked to the international best practices developing new settlements. Nevertheless, the execution of principles underlying the development of African cities has however lacked principle standards of execution. The developments have been based on social-cultural attributes of cities regarding their native country's cultural framework and economic aspirations. Lack of principle standards therefore creates the necessity for enhanced service delivery in executing core functions of a city. New developments such as the Kpone city however posit a clear show of possibilities of achieving effective and sustainable urban development across different urban cities in the long-run.

City of Accra

The study of the city of Accra presents numerous options that are regarded essential to the realization of immense development opportunities as well as other correlations with the soundest outcomes. The resolution of Kpone city

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expansion challenges involves community-based micro-improvement process that facilitates generation of economic interests as well as stakeholders relative to the development of small cities as alternative investment and residential hub of Accra. This study also provides a critical analysis of factors subject to the undertaking of essential development of Kpone amidst challenges of diverse and increased population. The development of a robust framework that generates critical insights to enhanced city planning is an ideal path for Kpone and other cities seeking to resolve urban congestion challenge. Besides, this process also sets precedence to enhanced operational framework of the city through adoption of Main Street urban design framework which is a novel idea in the context of Ghanaian cities and African continent's cities at large. However, the endorsement of such design is pivotal in enhancing the overall city life in general.

City or urban development has been subject to multiple challenges in the modern world. The problem has however been compounded in developing economies due to increased social-economic challenges derailing expansion prospects. Although city developers have a clear vision of what they intend to realize in developing city design framework, the sustainability and efficiency of such developments may not be feasible in near future basing a judgment on the proposed developments and the potential milestone alongside available resources. Local authorities are required to ensure that the quality attributed to other surrounding development is also ascribed to the standards of the current project framework.

However, there has been prevailing critics that despite investing heavily on development of cities, mid-term period sees the development of cities into ‘ghettos for rich residents alone’. With this perception in mind, one of the elements that have been factored in the development of Kpone is ensuring that all income groups are given a fair share of the city amenities including housing units that fit into their needs. The development and layouts for both rich and less rich settlements areas seeks to accommodate the informal and other emerging economic prospects thus, an allowance of diverse styles. Subsequently, this scenario presents an essential component of progressive growth of the city in the long-run as far as economic activities are concerned.

Ideal African city is anticipated to arise from the combination of sets of improvements realized from past malpractices that has been identified as potential source of failure of many urban developments. In the Kpone city, subscribers to its ideal claims that it will be one of the places where individuals optimally experience environmental, social and economic benefits offered by any high-profile urban environment. Individuals within the context of urban environment are both social and economic beings while the African city must support and inculcate the two prospects of human lives if it has to excel. With increased globalization where people from different geographical regions worldwide live and works the same, consume similar foods and use similar technologies, the need for a harmonized lifestyles is a major consideration. In this regard, the development of the Kpone city has many factors in consideration that will tap into a common urban environment that will diverse population while at the same time offering a

lucrative opportunity to decongest the city. In essence, the development of Kpone City is anchored on multiple set of challenges that has continued to be experienced not only in Accra but also in other African cities in general. The need to contain swelling population and the resultant congestion is therefore highly warranted.