

Final Review Report ISVSej_13.04.08_Raymond

Compiled from Two Reviews

Please use this number to identify the revision.

Title of paper: Decay and Durability: A Building Condition Assessment of Colonial Mercantile Warehouses on Port Harcourt's Waterfront

General

This paper examines the building conditions of the colonial mercantile warehouses on the waterfront of Port Harcourt in Nigeria. However, it has some issues to be resolved to bring coherence and meaningfulness to the paper.

Title: Title is composed reasonably well. However, some improvements are needed. Following is suggested:

Towards Regeneration of Heritage Buildings: A Building Condition Assessment of Decay and Durability of the Colonial Mercantile Warehouses on the Waterfront of Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

Justification: This paper intends to offer assessments of the building condition of the colonial mercantile warehouses on the waterfront of Port Harcourt, Nigeria, with the intention to facilitate their conservation. The title must make this clear. Moreover, although the Nigerians may know that Port Harcourt is in Nigeria, it is not necessarily obvious to the international readers. Therefore, it is necessary to say that this is in Nigeria. Moreover, 'Port Harcourt's Waterfront,' is an awkward phrase linguistically. The proper phrase is Waterfront of Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

Language: Language is reasonably good. However, there are some issues in terms of grammar and the use of phrases. Pay attention to definite and indefinite articles. Please follow the language standards.

Formatting: This paper has major issues in formatting. General text must be Times New Roman 11 points, single line spacing and fully justified. Sub titles must be 12 points: not 13 or 15. Do not number the sub titles. There should be no space between the sub title and the text below. No gaps between paragraphs too. First lines of all the paragraphs must be indented. Tables and Fig titles must be always 10 points. Line spaces must be always single even inside tables. Download the template from the website and follow the specifications with attention to details.

Abstract

The abstract is not written well. An abstract must be in three paragraphs as per the ISVS standards. The first paragraph must introduce the issue. Current abstract does not present the issue but declares what the paper examines also saying that it addresses a documented gap in which current scholarship treats heritage buildings as static artefacts. All these three ideas are in a single sentence running into 4.5 lines. Even before introducing the issue, it rushes to say what it examines. This is not proper. The second paragraph presents the research methods in the first sentence that runs into seven lines saying what methods, which case studies why and all of that again in a single sentence. This is also not proper. Write short, meaningful sentences. The third paragraph presents conclusions, related to a 'regeneration strategy,' which was not what was examined either according to the title or according to the first paragraph. Thus, there is a lack of consistency in the narrative. This is why this idea is introduced into the title suggested. Moreover, the writings use first person (which should be avoided in scientific research unless the examination is a first-person phenomenological inquiry). It says "we trace the warehouses' trajectory," which can be stated using passive voice. It again says 'we argue' in the conclusion paragraph, which is not acceptable. Research must not 'argue' but produce conclusions. In essays, one can argue, but preferably not in research.

Key words: Identified reasonably well. However, 'Nigeria' is missing. If anyone is looking for research on heritage architecture of Nigeria, using the keywords mentioned, they may not find this paper. That is the purpose of keywords. Please add appropriate keywords: warehouses, Nigeria, etc.

Paper

1. The introduction:

Introduction is not written well. The immediate issue is port Harcourt in Nigeria. There is also the issue of knowledge gap arising from a particular approach to the studies. However, the gist of the paper is that the deserving heritage buildings in Nigeria must be regenerated and preserved. This is indeed the broader context which is vaguely mentioned at the end of the conclusion when it says that “deciding factor between demolition and viable adaptive reuse” is indeed in the assessment of the building conditions, which do not appear to be done these days. It is in that context, that this study investigates the buildings in Port Harcourt. Therefore, the introduction must begin with a reference to the broader context and in so doing mention that there is an attitudinal problem, knowledge gap etc. Although the current introduction introduces the Port Harcourt and the buildings, it does not also say that the research evaluates the conditions of the buildings. Instead, the last sentence of the current introduction refers to “What has not previously been established empirically.” Then it abruptly ends.

It is suggested that the introduction produces a brief discussion about the issue of regeneration/ preservation of heritage buildings in Nigeria in general and in Port Harcourt in particular. Then it should say that there is a lack of clear understanding as to how to determine what to demolish and what to conserve etc. The current “documentary tradition: identifying, dating, and describing surviving structures without independently verifying their present structural condition” can also be referred to. However, afterwards, it should say what this research exactly does: It evaluates the conditions of selected buildings in Port Harcourt. Do not go into the details of these buildings here. Define the aim of doing so and the objectives expected to achieve. There should be one aim and several objectives. An introduction must introduce the issue as related to the title, and as claimed in the abstract. It must then say what this research specifically examines, followed by the aim and the objectives.

Please note that aims are noble, unmeasurable, long term, ‘almost-impossible-to-fully-achieve’ expectations while objectives are practical, measurable, short-term, achievable intentions. ‘To examine’ and ‘to understand’ cannot be objectives. They are not measurable; cannot be fully achieved. The introduction must end with the aim and the objectives. List the objectives starting with ‘to’ and then STOP. That is how a proper introduction to a research paper is written. Please look at previous ISVS e-journal research papers.

2. **Theoretical Framework:** This paper does not have any theoretical framework established for the study, although it does deal with a number of them. In fact, it mentions the theoretical ideas such as ‘heritage,’ ‘adaptive reuse,’ ‘decay and durability,’ as well as ‘colonial mercantile and administrative architecture.’ However, none of them are theoretically discussed to produce a coherent theoretical framework. This is absolutely necessary. Start the theoretical framework by saying which theoretical ideas are relevant to this research: heritage, colonialism, traditions, adaptive reuse,’ ‘decay and durability,’ ‘craftsmanship,’ ‘local materials’ ‘identity’ etc. currently, some of them are referred to in the review of literature. Begin the theoretical framework with an introduction to these ideas; particularly what is meant by heritage, decay and durability as articulated by the well-known theoreticians. However, use proper citing systems and refer to only the last names such as Rapoport (1969) Oliver (1977) etc. Do not mention full names. At the end, produce a graphically illustrated theoretical model showing the complexity of the relationships of the ideas. That is a framework. Currently, this paper does not have one.

3. **Review of Literature:** This paper does not have good review of literature. There is some reference to previous research but it is too focused on the studies related to Port Harcourt. Generally, a review of literature should discuss the major **research** that has examined the broader issue previously to show the status of current knowledge, and where the gaps of that knowledge exist. This is done in order to provide the academic context for the paper. Currently, the review of literature is fused with the theoretical ideas. It says so in the second paragraph when it says that “The broader adaptive reuse literature supplies the theoretical basis.” This is not proper; inadequate too. Please produce a proper theoretical framework as suggested before the review of literature.

Afterwards, review what those who have done research related to the issue of regeneration, adaptive reuse, or conservation of heritage have found out. Many such research exist. This should review the most significant research and **NOT** talk about theory at all. It should review local research only at the end. Conclude this section with a statement about where the gaps of knowledge exist.

4. **Research Methodology:** There is a reasonably well-written research methodology. However, although it employs case study as a method and examines a number of case studies, it does not say so. Begin this section by re-stating that this research is primarily “an evaluation of the building conditions” of selected heritage buildings in Nigeria. Please remember the title says “A Building Condition Assessment.” However, it seems that the actual research goes beyond that. It mentions a number of data gathering techniques: Documentary survey (referred to as Historical Reconstruction involving archival study), a Community Perception Survey, Building Condition Assessment (matrix is not a method; it is a tool). It also mentions a Photographic Survey stealthily. Please list them first as Data Gathering Techniques, and then, each must be explained as to how they were carried out. Currently, some of them are presented well in terms of details. Please list the criteria for building evaluation in a table with the marks allocated for each aspect in a separate column. Narrative text is not appropriate as a ‘Matrix.’ Please also say where the matrix came from.
5. **Introduction to Case Studies:** Currently, the case study / studies are not introduced at all, although there is an attempt in the introduction. Please introduce the case study of Port Harcourt with general details: include a location plan and the specific case study buildings examined. Add images. Describe all the five of them briefly. It says “colonial mercantile warehouses (designated A1–A5).” Show each A1, A2, A3, A4, A5 with their locations, plans and images etc.
6. **Findings:** Please sub title this section as ‘Findings’ instead of ‘results.’ Please reproduce a short introduction to the issue examined (remind yourself too) first and then present the data from all the data gathering techniques. This means the following.
 - **Document Survey data from the Archival records.** Following documents have been mentioned:
National Archives of Nigeria records (1920–1931)
documenting the original mercantile plot survey,
Floyer’s (1946) municipality report, and
Ministry of Lands & Survey town planning surveys (1974),
peer-reviewed historiography of Anyanwu (1971) and Kio-Lawson et al. (2014).
 - **Community Perception Survey** – It is claimed that 364 respondents participated in this. Show the outcome of this survey in relation to each of the buildings in Abonnema Wharf, Bundu Waterside and Marine Base.
 - **Results of the Building Condition assessments** related to the five colonial mercantile warehouses (designated A1–A5) at the Abonnema Wharf node, based on 6 criteria. This should produce 5 tables with 6 rows: one for each building.
 - **Results of the Photographic Survey:** Show photographs of decay as related to each of the five buildings. This should therefore present five tables with photographs embedded in one column and decay observations noted in the adjoining column.

Please note the following.

- Current ad-hoc few photographs are not acceptable.
- When presenting tables, please provide the longer versions of the abbreviated text. For example, in the Table 1. It is unclear what “SA A NS D SD” stand for.
- Presenting statistical data as text is not acceptable. For example, Community Perception of Physical Condition is statistical data, but they are presented as narrative.

Then produce the analysis of each data set.

7. Discussion is reasonably well done. However, comparisons with other places are without proper research or citations. This is problematic.
8. Please produce a list of conclusions before talking about the limitations: this should mention the building condition assessments of each of the five buildings derived from this research first. Show two aspects: Decay and Durability. Please note that the paper is titled “A Building Condition Assessment of Colonial Mercantile Warehouses on Port Harcourt’s Waterfront.” Nothing else. It is possible to make some overall comments about heritage buildings there. However, vaguely mentioning “that the corridor’s structures” is not an acceptable conclusion. Afterwards, discuss the strengths and weaknesses of this study and explain how it achieved the objectives. End the paper with the following: Acknowledgments, Conflict of Interest and Ethics Statements and Data Availability.

9. References: References are done reasonably well. However, some issues exist. In multiple authors, such as Dionizio, R. F., & López-Chao, V. there should be no comma after the last dot of the initials. For publishers, place of the publisher is needed before the publisher. Example, London: Cambridge University Press. Follow the standards.

Refer to the ISVS e-journal template.

Make sure that all the material cited in text are listed here.

Final Decision: Major Revisions

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Summary of the overall observations of the paper:

This is a potentially very valuable paper that could make a significant contribution to knowledge about the potentials of regeneration, conservation or adaptive reuse of heritage buildings of the colonial period in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. However, it needs major revisions to bring the findings to be cohesive, supported by clear findings.

The abstract is not well written: it does not introduce the issue and the research methods and also does not have specific conclusions.

The introduction needs to be presented articulating the general issue succinctly beginning with the general perspective of preservation of heritage and the ways in many buildings are evaluated wrongly without proper assessments of building conditions. Present what the research examines clearly, posing questions if any. It should end with proper focused aims and objectives in keeping with the specific issue of the buildings in Port Harcourt.

Please produce a theoretical framework adding definitions to the key theoretical ideas central to the issue. The review of literature is currently poor: it is inadequate and fuses some theoretical ideas. Therefore, a proper new review of literature is needed, that reviews similar research globally first and locally afterwards.

The research methodology needs to be organized well with the techniques employed to gather data and explanations of how this was carried out: Data gathering techniques are mentioned but need clarity. List them and provide details about how each one was carried out. Introduce the selection/exclusion criteria of the case study buildings. Provide details so that another researcher can repeat the same. That is the test of science.

Introduce Port Harcourt as the case study and the specific buildings afterwards, with details of the locations and criteria for selection. Identify specific buildings studied: Show images.

Present the 'findings' from each of the data gathering techniques mentioned before the analysis of the data. Present only the relevant and meaningful findings to reveal the 'building conditions' of the chosen five case studies. Focus on the issue and show how the actual conditions and people's perceptions differ.

Produce specific conclusions related to the five case studies first and then produce a summary.

Please note that case study findings cannot be generalized. Each building's current condition – Decay and Durability as Claimed - must be a conclusion. Revisit the aims and objectives and show how they were achieved. At the end, discuss the strengths, weaknesses and limitations of this research. Re-examine and reproduce the references to be compatible with the ISVS e-journal template.