

## *Full-Length Research Paper*

# The Role of Literature in Listing Heritage Building and Monuments in Rivers State, Nigeria

Chima Ichendu\* and Dennis Ejike Amadi

Department of Architectural Technology, Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic, Rumuola, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

\*Corresponding Author Email: [chimabright@yahoo.com](mailto:chimabright@yahoo.com)

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**ABSTRACT:** The cultural history, historical values, social values, economic strength, and architectural styles of a people are embedded in the old buildings of the past, including those of the state of Rivers and Nigeria in general. The concept of listing, conserving, restoring, and reusing heritage buildings as a global practice has been identified as a means of preserving the architectural history and culture of the state of Rivers. This paper examines the concept of listing heritage buildings and its domestication in listing historical buildings in Rivers State in order to help indigenous people to identify, appraise, preserve, restore, and conserve the embedded historical and cultural values of such old buildings as a tool for sustainable development in the State. At the conclusion of the study, the listed buildings and monuments in Nigeria were identified, along with the criteria for listing buildings and the technique for determining the level of repair, preservation, and care of listed buildings and monuments.

**Keywords:** Sustainable development, cultural values, historical identity, heritage, restoration

## INTRODUCTION

Around the globe, the quest for generational transformation has become a norm; this is felt in every facet of human endeavour. Significantly, the architectural values are one of the most important amongst the many. Buildings which depict the architectural characteristic of the people have greater impact thus the changes and transformation which has direct message to the future ought to be documented (Elias, 1989). Therefore, conserving these pieces has become a global trend, in view of that; this study aims at aligning with the global trend of appraising and presenting historical building in Nigeria, particularly, Rivers State as the primary study area.

History is the record of past events and important past moments. Historical conservation and preservation of arts, monuments buildings are vital part of cultural heritage, because of their architectural value and evidence of style and building techniques. According to Remeu, et al. (2018) the conservation of centuries heritage are the responsibilities of the society, in order to pass to future generation gift from the past.

This social responsibility of the society has been neglected in most emerging or developing societies due to the quest to meet up with the so-called world standard (Alexander, 2021).

The problems of relics, heritage building and monuments are twofold. One is anthropogenic, which includes human neglect and wanton damage and destruction of heritage buildings or monuments (Titchen, 1995). The other is natural, for instance climate change and weather over years defaces monuments and can wreck buildings, acid rain can also affect the structure and the strength of the buildings, therefore this important heritage must be preserved.

Sustainable development is all about enjoying resources and also allowing future generation to have a taste of the same resource or resources. Our important buildings could serve as valuable resource for future generation, if we value what we have.

However, ignorance or inferiority complex have made most of the emerging economy to neglect homemade structures and rebuild or destroy ancient edifice or

structures with the state of art technology (Alexander, 2021).

Finding if there are historical buildings, what their status are, what could be done to ameliorate the challenges associated with the historical buildings in line with the global best sustainable practices.

This work is an appraiser to the approach and mechanism through which building were listed and conserved as heritage building, especially existing historic buildings within Rivers State, Nigeria, towards adoptive reuse. It is also an urgent call to awaken the indigenous people of Rivers State of need to preserve and list heritage within their domain.

### Objectives of the study

Traditional and classical buildings in Rivers State of the 17<sup>th</sup> up to the 19<sup>th</sup> century are left to decay, this have rendered most building obsolete and disuse. Buildings from inception engulf several resources ranging from time, energy and monetary values. In addition to the embedded energy associated with the delivery of building to its end user at a particular time with the notion that the building has “performed its use”. This ideology has become the paradigm in today’s world, especially around this part of the world.

However, considering all other factors embedded in building construction and the place at which the world is today; it becomes imperative to sort for means of adopting the reuse of historic building and revisiting them towards restoration into a “heritage” building. These building might no longer suit its design concept due to increase in size and need of spaces but could be adopted for other significant need, especially as a historic building that will serve as an architectural monument. Through literature appraisals, basic methodology through which existing building were listed and conserved where studied and presented in this work. This well eases up carrying holistic on the site assessments of existing buildings within Rivers State and its environment.

The aim of this study is to appraise the approach and mechanism through which building were listed and conserved as heritage build especially existing historic buildings within Rivers state, Nigeria, towards adoptive reuse. This work also seeks to encourage the society to identify ancient buildings, monuments and relics; informing the government and other relevant agencies of the existence of such structures as a result of reading about the importance of heritage in this paper. This is an urgent call to review how our local or native buildings are viewed.

### Area of the study

Nigeria is a member of the African Union (AU) and has the highest population in Africa. The population of Nigeria

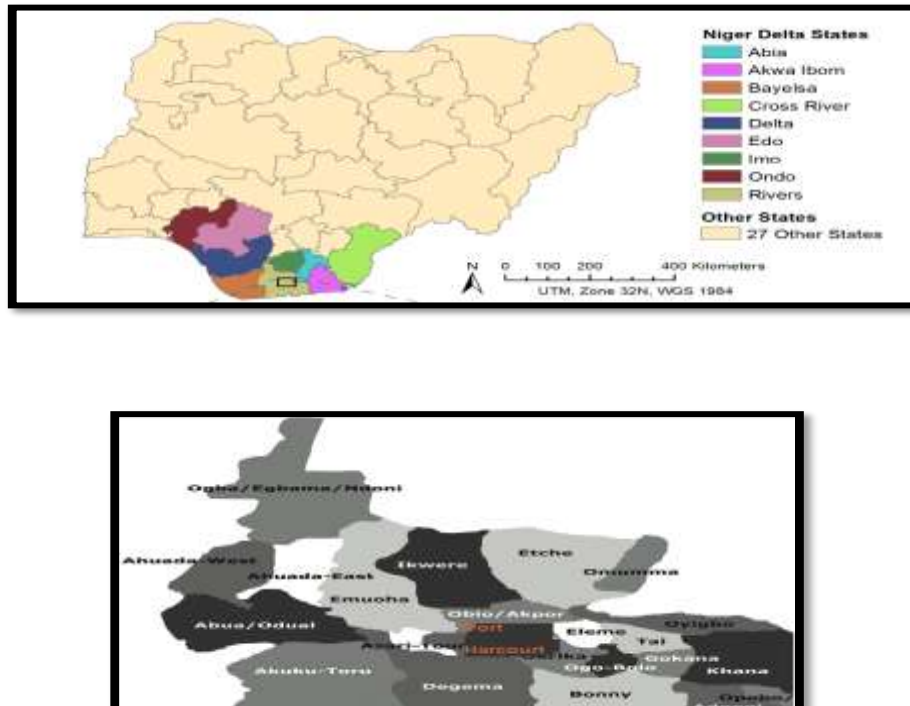
is estimated at 182.2 million, and ranked the 8th most populous nation in the world (Ichendu, 2019). The nation is divided into six (6) geopolitical zones with thirty-six (36) states, including Abuja the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). The country located on the West African region, with a total area of about 923,768 sq km, between latitude 4<sup>o</sup> to 14<sup>o</sup> north and longitude 2<sup>o</sup> to 5<sup>o</sup> to the east. The country is naturally endowed with surplus resources and minerals and a notable member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), with crude oil deposit of about 36 billion barrels. The nation is ranked the 18th producer of crude oil, and about 187.44 trillion cubic of natural gas (Ichendu, 2019) (Figure 1).

According to Ichendu (2019), Rivers State is one of the 36 states in Nigeria. With Port Harcourt as the capital, Rivers State has 23 local government areas. Population of about 5.18 million as at the 2006 census, ranked the 6th most populous state. The state is located within the south-south geopolitical zone of Nigeria, occupies an area of 21850 sq km. In addition, the state has a diverse ethnicity and language, with the Atlantic Ocean on the south, Abia, Anambra and Imo north, Akwa Ibom east and Bayelsa and Delta West, with coordinates 4<sup>o</sup>, 45" north and 6<sup>o</sup>, 50" east (Ichendu, 2019)

In recent time, there are concentrations on building new structures around this part of the world. Yet the old buildings are left unused which invariably causes them to decay. However, around the globe especially, the developed and some developing nation have changed that paradigm. Building restoration is an age long practice that allows certain building built within a season to attain heritage certification, this certification enables the building to become a tourist place or a national building for certain national events, or archival purposes, especially where the building was used for prominent events in the past. Hence the quest to investigate, appraise and recommend certain mythological approach to which heritage building were identified and listed, conserved and attain heritage status would be of great significance, especially when leveraged in areas like Rivers State for use today and for the future.

### The concept of conservation

Aligning with the global best practices towards attaining sustainable goals, hence, building restoration has become a norm around the world. The study of the existing historic buildings and documenting same have not only the benefits of restoration for perseverance for the present generation, But the knowledge of the several saving of the embedded energy expanded during pre to post construction as well as icon of legacy for the future generation. As such has become significant that requires holistic inventory and documentation. This restoration process through architectural research will in line with global trend avail the opportunity for adoptive reuse of



**Figure 1:** Map of Nigeria showing Niger delta states particularly Rivers State in ash-shade extracted from (Yakubu, 2018) and map of Rivers State showing the local government area extracted from (Nwauzoma and Dappa, 2013).

these monumental structures. Globally, the movement for preservation which emerged from Europe over centuries past had tremendous influence on the present day preservation practices. However, History, accounts only traced to the 14<sup>th</sup> Century, after several wars attacked by enemies, a lot of historical monuments were destroyed, while others are partly damaged and few remained unharmed (Urma, 2013 and Sodangi *et al.* 2011). Unfortunately, Human activity and development continue, without due considerations to the relics and artefacts of the tangible monuments for towards precautionary measure and to safeguard the significant value of the built remains. Urma, (2013) posit that Later in the 14th century, the people became observant, hence, realizing that there is disconnected between the past and the present world subject to the significant irreversible loss of historical monuments of substantial value. At this era, there were calls for the restoration a protection of historic monuments at the period in the 15th century for the resilience of heritage properties especially that of the Romans. Sodangi *et al.* (2011) added that late in the 17th century, the notion of historic monument conservation was acknowledged for the preservation of tangible and intangible heritage for future and historical references. Thus, the conservation of the historic heritage

monuments marked a significant part in depicting identity of a place around the globe. According to Harun (2011), the affirmation of the historic monument preservation in the 17th century marked the era of establishing National museum worldwide whose primary aim is the conservation, preservation, and restoration of the nation's historical, cultural, art and scientific relics for every country with a vision of universal value. Hence, the concept of cultural resilience is also a strategy or a step to conservation of historic monuments practice. Secondly, tangible monuments are physical historical record of the past, which is a link connection to the present for the future. Besides, the fabric of architectural built heritage are pieces of evidences of historical records similar to written documents as the buildings spell out the incidences of the past by displaying the embodiment artefacts (Zubairu *et al.*, 2012).

Thirdly, it is every nation's obligation to work hand in hand to safeguard its historical monuments, tangible and intangible. Furthermore, it is significant to note that well preserved and documented historical values are not only for national benefit but indeed a universal value. Finally, the National Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM) is saddled with the responsibility to protect and preserve all tangible and intangible heritage properties in

Nigeria. This was officially established in 1979, and given autonomy by the Federal Government of Nigeria in the decree 77 of 1979 (Zubairu et al., 2012).

### Historical building

A historic building is any building which its presence reports an incidence. It psychologically gives a sense of wander and glimpse of the past. Thus, fascinating the present generation towards having knowledge of the cultural practices of societies in that past that produced the building. Despite what the building stands for, there are certain characteristics which the building produces some which are embedded with indigenous architectural ideology, aesthetic, historical, archaeological, economic, social, artefacts, cultural or symbolic values. Precisely, the first impact to admire historic building is cultural affection, for it is a symbol of cultural identity and continuity part of heritage (Zubairu et al., (2012).

### Conservation

Conservation can be referred to as a wisdom act and prime decision to prolong the existence of our culture and valuable heritage belongings in our cultural milieu. Furthermore, it is the process of keeping historical monuments to the present for the recognition and admiring of events and historical pieces of evidences of the past. Thereby, building mind thoughts and acknowledging the emotional, cultural and use values enjoyed and conceived by the preceded ancestors in the past for the present to poses and convey to the subsequent future generations (Ready and Navrud 2002). Therefore, conservation is a strategic intervention that maintains tangible and intangible historical values and records for the future pieces of evidences and identity continuity. Significantly, conservation does not only upkeep a historic monument but also clinches the relationship between the people and the place, building rapport with their culture as a souvenir and uplifting the outstanding value in their cultural setting. Hence, researchers, archaeologist and conservationist should professionally provide tangible scientific research findings and method to enhance the conservation and preservation of cultural properties in our cultural setting (Sandbhor and Botre, 2013). Owing to the fact that conservation intervention includes examinations, documentations, treatment, case studies, conservation plans and preventive care (Ranalli et al., 2004). In that order, conservation is felt as all the interventions and effortless strategy including examinations, presentation, restoration and enhancement, intentionally to promote the outstanding value of cultural heritage properties, exploring the knowledge and phenomenon of history and meaning of the cultural asset and guarantee its material safeguard (Sandbhor and Botre, 2013). Furthermore, all

actions and processes of restoring and safeguarding work of architecture, art, archaeology and artefacts from history is simply termed conservation. Sandbhor and Botre, (2013) further add that any action taken to avoid an asset or group of assets from decaying, deterioration, obsolescence, fading away, or destruction is referred to as conservation.

### Architectural heritage conservation

Architectural heritage refers to a building or group of buildings that have significant value inherited from past generation. Indeed, the identified group of buildings are embedded with religious, historical, embodiment artefact, and cultural significance related to the immediate environment (Urma, 2013 and Sodangi *et al.* (2011). Correspondingly, from the perspective view of the international organizations, described architectural heritage conservation as the conservation of a historic building with outstanding universal value from the point of view of history. The physical life of the building is interpreted as monument that witnesses constructive cultures and event during its morphological development due to the fact is embedded with artefacts of significant value (Urma, 2013 and Sodangi *et al.* (2011).

### Revival Processes of Safeguarding Architectural Heritage through Conservation

Architectural heritage conservation is the acknowledgement and interpretation of a historic monument that is rooted with artefact where it is originated by the idea of group of people.

The building is conceived as a result of witnessing a constructive cultures and historical incidences during the physical life of the building. Urma, (2013) and Sodangi *et al.* (2011), suggested that the conservation of heritage properties has no exception to every developed or developing country, as the pose functionally in the environmental set up found Thereby, displaying Tangible historical pieces of evidences. Therefore, safeguarding architectural heritage properties through conservation have different techniques.

According to Sodangi *et al.* (2011), mentioned that the process of conserving architectural built assets for prolonging the valuable historical features include the intervention of restoration, preservation, repair, maintenance, repurposing, renovation, remediation and adaptation. In this case, Urma, (2013), defines rehabilitation as the process of bringing back a historic building to its previous condition or status. Furthermore, he defined remediation as the process of making good defects of a historic building preventing it from decaying. Correspondingly, restoration is the process of making a historic building intact by carefully placing back the artefact as a valuable layer to the physical condition of

the building which it would have been in that state previously during its morphological stages of development (Urma, 2013 and Sodangi *et al.* (2011). While adaptation is also another technique of conservation which involves all the process of retaining the cultural heritage value of a historic building through modifying a compatible space for a new usage to suit new condition (Urma, 2013 and Sodangi *et al.* (2011).

The four major revival processes of conservation are being defined by exploring their characteristic of intervention typology. It is generally understood that the intervention of a historic building when conceived for conservation depends on how bad or good the condition of the building is found. Specifically meaning, if the building is so much damaged, suffering from obsolescence and deterioration, and then more or less the combination of all the revival process will be intervened to restore back and prolong the physical state of the building. For example, combination of three revival processes may include bringing back to its condition, replacing back the artefacts and making good defects by rehabilitating, restoring and remediating respectively.

Furthermore, if there is need in change of demand as a result of redundancy, it can finally be adapted into new use to suit new condition. On the other hand, if the historic building is in a good state, it will only need an identified intervention, like making good defect of the building and conserve is to the future generation. Above all, conservation is the strategic method that governs the sum of all the processes of intervention. For instance, conservation is a phenomenon that employs the concept of understanding and promotes social-concern of safeguarding cultural heritage value of a building. It involves the consideration for existing fabric, surrounding, meaning and use of a place. Besides, it has the principle and attitude of being cautious to executing building work, meanwhile retaining the authenticity and integrity of the building to enhance the originality of the building's fabric intact with its value up-keeping to the subsequent generation perpetually (Urma, 2013 and Sodangi *et al.*, 2011).

### Existing Buildings and Heritage Buildings

According to Historical England and the Department for Communities and Local Government of United Kingdom the definition of Heritage assets is: "A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. "Historic buildings and sites should be preserved as cultural legacy and common heritage.

The Charter of Krakow is the most recent document defining the principles for conservation and restoration of built heritage. There are categories among the existing buildings and sites depending on its cultural values,

antiquity or artistic importance. They are categorised depending on the country or state; generally, they include common recent existing buildings, catalogued buildings with protected areas and heritage buildings that are clearly protected. This research focuses on private medium size protected buildings. The difference between common existing buildings and heritage ones is that heritage projects involve architectural, historic and archaeological documentation, so it involves the technical reproduction of a context, as well as an intellectual effort to describe the socio-cultural heritage setting (Jordan-Palomar *et al.*, 2018).

### Listed building

A listed building is one which has been formally declared to be of special architectural or historic interest by being placed on statutory lists compiled by the National Commission for Museums and Monuments. An object or structure that has been judged to be of national importance in terms of its cultural significance could also be listed (Borri, and Corradi, 2019). When a building, object or structure is listed, both the exterior and the interior are protected. Listing ensures that the architecture and historic interest of the building are carefully considered before any alterations, either outside or inside are carried out. Permission known as listed building consent must be obtained from the local planning authority for any proposed alteration that would affect a listed building, object or structure of special interest. The objectives of this research could therefore be grouped into three namely;

1. To determine the list and the location of listed buildings and monuments in Nigeria
2. To determine the criteria for the listing of such buildings and monuments.
3. To determine the level of preservation and maintenance of such buildings and monuments.

### Importance of listed buildings

A listed building is an irreplaceable record that contributes to understanding of the past and the present. Its presence adds to the quality of life, by enhancing the familiar and cherished local scene, and sustaining the sense of local distinctiveness that is an important aspect of the character of the environment. The historic environment also has immense importance for leisure, recreation and as part of the national and international tourism industry. It is important that the physical survival of the past be valued and protected as a central part of cultural heritage and a sense of identity. The listing of a building provides statutory protection against alteration or demolition that would damage its special architectural or historical interest. Therefore, there should be an effective

protection for all important features of the historic environment (Zubairu et al., 2012)

### Criteria for listing a building

According to CIB Commission (2010), the following criteria must be fulfilled before a building is chosen for listing as heritage facility. Some of the criteria include:

a) Historical significance of the building: - A building which illustrates an important aspect of the nation's social, economic and cultural history. A building that play an important role or demonstrated close historical association with nationally important people or events.

b) The importance of the building: its intrinsic architectural interest and rarity in both national and local terms. A building of architectural interest means a building which is nationally important for the interest of its architectural design, decoration and craftsmanship involved. It also includes a building with a special type and technique of construction that portrays the culture of a particular area.

c) The building's setting and the contribution to the local scene, which may be very important that is, where it forms an element in a group, park, or other townscape, or where it shares particular architectural forms or details with other buildings nearby.

d) The extent of which the proposed works would bring substantial benefits for the community and particularly, by contributing to the economic regeneration of the area or the enhancement of its environment.

When a building is listed, the building is immediately protected by law, and any changes including demolition, alteration and extensions to it must first receive listed building consent.

### Origin of listed buildings

The origin of listed buildings and monuments can be traced back to 1882, when the Ancient Monuments Protection Act of 1882 enacted to protect ancient monuments was promulgated. During World War II many ancient buildings were destroyed by the Nazi bombs that prompted the first form of listing of buildings that were deemed to be of particular architectural merit. Three hundred members of the Royal Institute of British Architects and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings participated in the preparation of the list. Buildings that survived the bombings and those destroyed needed to be documented so as to determine the buildings to be rebuilt. The current basis for listing was developed for the wartime system and provided in the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947. This shows that the need to protect and preserve ancient and historical buildings and monuments had long been identified and provided for by many developed countries such as France, Italy, Great Britain, Germany, and United

States of America. Listed buildings and monuments help the citizens of a country to understand their shared history so as to prepare for the future (CIB Commission, 2010).

### Listings in Britain

In England, listed buildings are designated by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, acting on advice from English Heritage. Britain has a well-documented list for listed buildings of both cultural and architectural importance; this could be tied to the importance attached to preserving their cultural heritage. A listed building in the United Kingdom is a building or other structure officially designated as being of special architectural interest or cultural and historical value. This best explains why Britain has a high number of listed buildings and monuments; there are approximately 374,081 listed building entries. There are also:

- 19,717 scheduled ancient monuments,
- 1,601 registered historic parks and gardens
- 9,080 conservation areas
- 43 registered historic battlefields
- 46 designated wrecks
- 17 World Heritage Sites. In England and Wales the authority for the listing of a building or monument is granted by the Planning Act of 1990 and it is said to be administered by an agency called the English heritage. About 45% of the listed buildings are made up of churches and the majority of the listings were done between the 18th and 19th century (CIB Commission, 2010).

### Listing in some other parts of the world

In most cities and countries around the world there is the need for protection and preservation of the historical buildings and monuments. The authority of listing rests on the state or council. In certain cities and countries, a commission is set up with the power to grant the right of listing to a building or monument and that structure therefore enjoys the benefits attached to a listed structure. In Philadelphia in the United States of America, the city adopted a preservation ordinance in 1955 and thereby established the Philadelphia in Historical Commission. In Philadelphia alone since then there have been over 10,000 properties designated as being of historical importance, they are made up of churches, hotels, cemeteries, apartment buildings, bridges and parks.

This kind of listing is common around the various states in the United States of America.

In Northern Ireland the listed buildings are administered by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency; the agency

derives its power from Article 42 of the Planning Order of 1991. In Scotland the Historical Scotland is the agency responsible for the listing of the buildings and scheduled monuments; it derives its power from the Town and Country Planning Act of 1997. According to CIB Commission (2010), heritage preservation and enhancement forms a major component of town and country planning policies in Cyprus and this was well enshrined in the planning legislation. The Town and Planning Law was enacted in 1972 but was put into use in 1990. These examples show that many countries of the world have not only tried to preserve their heritage but they have enshrined it into their laws so as to protect these historical buildings and monuments for the future.

### Listings in Nigeria

Nigeria is a country made of people with diverse cultural backgrounds and this is exhibited in the buildings and monuments that they have erected to represent their beliefs and history. However as was the case with many countries before they started to preserve their heritage, many of these structures have been demolished. In Nigeria the preservation of listed buildings and structures is vested in the National Commission for Museum and Monuments. It is sad to note that there is considerable drought in terms of literature regarding listing of buildings in Nigeria when compared with other countries. The benefit of preserving these buildings are quite great and a lot needs to be done in this area this is evident by the number of buildings and monuments available in the database of listed buildings and monuments available at the National Commission of Museum and Monuments (2009). This list is discussed in subsequent sections of this paper (Zubairu et al., 2012).

### Heritage building conservation and tourism

The popular appeal of cultural heritage is easily seen through observations of heritage tourism. The rapidly globalizing and modernizing world is witnessing a fast emergence of heritage consciousness. With the work of international organizations like the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Jordan-Palomar et al., 2018) (UNESCO) and other notable heritage organizations and agencies of various countries, the need for understanding and protecting heritage has tremendously increased. In discussing heritage building conservation, Sodangi *et al.* (2011) pointed out that the identity of a people and nation is largely defined by their heritage which is a legacy that is passed down from one generation to another. These legacies are irreplaceable sources of life and inspiration which provide people with a sense of place and inform the people about who they are

and how their society has developed over time. Heritage places as unique and diverse as the Mount Kinabalu of Malaysia, the Pyramids of Egypt, the Taj Mahal of India, the Great Barrier Reef in Australia and the Baroque Cathedrals of Latin America make up some of the world's heritage (Sodangi, et al., 2011).

Heritage could either be natural or cultural which may be significant for historical, architectural, scientific or for any other distinct cultural value. Natural heritage includes culturally significant landscapes, landforms, flora and fauna. In contrast, cultural heritage includes tangible culture (such as buildings, monuments, tombs, artefacts, books and works of art) and intangible culture (such as knowledge, language, tradition, music and folklore). While 'heritage' suggests a very wide subject, this research focuses on heritage buildings since they are regarded as the main components of tangible cultural heritage that societies want to keep, share and pass on to future generations. Besides, they are regarded as fundamental cultural heritage elements that strengthen a country's national identity and sovereignty as well as capture its soul and spirit (Ayangbile, and Abiodun, 2014). The buildings remain the best form in which historic cultural heritage can be expressed. The buildings characterize the history of people and nations. They serve as the table from which this history can be read and in this way, the life of a society in the past, its values in the present and directions for the future are decorated on heritage buildings. Idrus *et al.* (2010) describes heritage buildings as buildings built in the past which have high historical and architectural values and require continuous care and protection to conserve their cultural heritage significance for as long as possible. Similarly, Ayangbile, and Abiodun, (2014) describes a heritage buildings as irreplaceable sources of life and inspirations which for various reasons society has decided shall be conserved for as long as possible and they differ from modern buildings because they are expected to last forever.

The growth of tourism has propelled the emergence of heritage tourism which is a potential form of alternative tourism to both local and foreign tourists (Harun, 2011). Over the years, the global influx of tourists to Malaysia and the growing interest in heritage tourism have increased the number of heritage tourists visiting heritage cities of Malaysia especially Malacca and Penang (Idrus *et al.*, 2010). In Malaysia today, heritage buildings are regarded as highly valuable assets due to their cultural significance and tourism potentials Idrus et al. (2010). The buildings are regarded as essential products of promoting heritage tourism because of their strong influence in motivating cultural heritage tourists to visit the country. Cultural heritage tourists are attracted to these buildings due to their cultural uniqueness, high historical and architectural values, and the strong desire to see something different (Idrus *et al.*, 2010).

The increasing consciousness in the cultural significance of the buildings has helped in conserving these assets to promote heritage tourism as well as boost revenue generation in the country. In the year 2010, the country attracted 24.6 million foreign tourists and generated RM56.5 billion to the tourism sector (Sodangi *et al.*, 2011). Therefore, it became imperative to conserve heritage buildings in Malaysia considering their high tourism potentials and the fact that the buildings serve as fundamental cultural heritage elements that strengthen Malaysia's national identity and sovereignty as well as capture its soul and spirit. It is mainly through heritage conservation that a society can pass onto future generations what is currently identified as being of cultural significance today (Idrus *et al.* (2010). Every building whether heritage or new, requires care and protection to limit deterioration (Idrus *et al.*, 2010). For heritage buildings, efficient maintenance management practices are essential in extending the life of the buildings and avoiding the need for potentially expensive and disruptive repair works, which may damage the heritage values of the building (Idrus *et al.*, 2010)

### **Sustainable development and heritage building**

Sustainable development and heritage conservation have become guiding principles for our modern industrial society. Besides, it has been universally recognised that the conservation of heritage buildings has environmental sustainability benefits. Heritage building conservation reduces energy usage associated with demolition, waste disposal and new construction, and promotes sustainable development by conserving the embodied energy in the existing buildings. In order to achieve a sustainable management of heritage building conservation in Malaysia, it is vital that maintenance takes a leading role in conserving the heritage values of the buildings. Various authors have described regular maintenance as the most important, pragmatic, sustainable and philosophically appropriate method of conserving heritage buildings. However, poor maintenance management of heritage buildings leads to serious building defects that could threaten both the safety of occupants and building fabric.

Maintenance of heritage buildings is quite different from new buildings because the fabric of a heritage building has cultural significance which must be retained maximally and the authenticity of a heritage building depends essentially on the integrity of its fabric. The maintenance of heritage buildings involves repairing the building fabric very close to the original using traditional techniques and traditional matching materials and being sensitive to the original structure. Therefore, the maintenance of a heritage building is done without unnecessarily disturbing or destroying the historic fabric; damaging the character of the building and altering the

features which give the building historic, architectural and cultural significance. (Sodangi *et al.*, 2011)

### **Heritage building**

Heritage buildings are tangible manifestations of town's identity and a physical expression of the cultural heritage of the people of the town. The buildings provide a link to the history and culture of a nation and particular town. Heritage buildings very often provide a suitable background, or home, for the cultural life of a town. Generally, heritage buildings are located in central parts of a town and, combined with appropriate services; they help make the central parts of a town attractive area to visit by residents and tourists. The built heritage is important as it helps to maintain community identity, enhance the image of the area and local neighbourhoods, contribute to the quality of life for residents and communities, assist with economic development and tourism initiatives; and initiate conservation led regeneration (Sodangi *et al.*, 2011)

### **Genesis of Heritage Conservation**

The fruits of built heritage conservation efforts are now easily valued because conserved heritage buildings and sites are today seen and enjoyed by much of the world's population (Idrus *et al.*, 2010). Societies have continuously been worried by the loss of valued assets and aspects of their environments. The origin of conservation minded actions dates back to the time the first person attempted to control unwanted changes to his living environment (Idrus *et al.*, 2010).

In other words, the instinct to conserve dates not long after early humans began creating objects and structures that could be used continually. Sodangi, *et al.* (2011) pointed out that researchers date the earliest creation of durable stone tools and equipment to about 300000 BCE and the oldest evidence of durable expressions of artistic and spiritual beliefs date to at least 50000 BCE. He further pointed out that the earliest evidence of the maintenance of buildings dates back to about 8000 BCE, which shows that from time immemorial, humans became interested in protecting their practical and symbolic legacies.

Between 960-1127 CE, tangible evidence of conserving artistic works of the distant past dates back in China and Northern Song Dynasty when inventories and collections of ancient bronzes were formed (Sodangi *et al.*, 2011 and Idrus *et al.*, 2010). Due to deep respect tradition in China, conservation awareness was carried into the 20th century. At that time, China and its neighbours have developed wider interest in conserving heritage (Stubbs, 2009). Educated Europeans in the early 15th century showed a growing understanding of human history as elements of the 'age of humanism' and afterwards the

'age of reason' developed together with significant modifications in the area of arts and science (Umar, 2018). The free quest for knowledge and its teachings from the Renaissance onward meant that with every passing year, people knew more about their past than ever before.

Since the beginning of the 18th Century; heritage conservation has progressed side by side with allied developments in history, archaeology, museology and ecology (Stubbs, 2009). The focus then was to save ancient monuments, significant religious buildings and national symbols. From the late 18th century, many heritage conscious individuals attempted to conserve heritage buildings and sites to the way they were thought to have previously appeared. By the 19th century, monuments were reordered and reconstructed with little proven evidence to what was thought to be the original design intention (Ichendu, 2021). The restoration works paid little respect to originality of the monuments. Towards the end of the 19th century, a popular restoration approach was adopted. The areas around culturally significant monuments were cleared and the monuments were then displayed in the midst of large parks and gardens.

However, Ichendu (2021) noted that a growing anti-restoration movement in the latter half of the 19th century began to emerge as an opposition to some of the poor restoration practices. The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) was established in 1877 in England. SPAB suggested that heritage building needed to be maintained within their settings rather than being isolated in a landscaped park. The SPAB's criticism of restoration practices of the time led to the replacement of the word 'restoration' with 'conservation' in England. According to SPAB, real heritage lay in the authentic monument, not in modern replicas. Also, the value of historic cities lay in terms of collective value of buildings, streets, and spaces that made up the character of old towns, which were being lost to modern developments and street widening projects. The conservative repair philosophy was introduced upon a manifesto written by William Morris and other founding members of SPAB in 1877.

Even though the idea of protecting cultural and natural heritage sites around the world began after the World War I; momentum for its actual establishment was not witnessed until the 1950s (Jokilehto, 2015). The nationalistic feelings in the aftermath of World War I and II and the economic value associated with cultural tourism triggered a growing interest in heritage, which later defined conservation in Europe in the 20th century.

To this regard, The Hague Convention which was the first UNESCO Convention on cultural heritage was launched in 1954 in order to protect cultural property in the event of armed conflict (Jokilehto, 2015). Development of a network of supportive legislation for heritage conservation

and collaboration with a host of international heritage conservation charters, programs and projects propagated by international organizations such as UNESCO and ICOMOS in the 20th century have contributed to making heritage conservation a participatory concern for millions of people all over the world (Jokilehto, 2015).

Heritage conservation approaches promote greater integration between disciplines and brings a community to limelight (Ichendu, 2021). Also, understanding the values of heritage emphasize the significance of multidisciplinary approaches among history, archaeology, museology, conservation, architecture, civil engineering, environmental engineering, quantity surveying and town planning among others. Civil engineering researchers in the field of heritage conservation need to establish close working relations with social science disciplines.

Heritage conservation is now a well-integrated worldwide concern that commonly engages large segments of the world's population. It has become a vibrant and autonomous field with many centres of interest including archaeology, museology, conservation science, civil engineering, urban planning, tourism, education and even national economic policy. This is evident by the growing public and institutional support dedicated to conservation of heritage buildings and sites.

## Conclusion

Listing, restoration, preservation, and conservation of heritage buildings and monuments have been identified as a sustainable tool for preventing the extinction of cultural and historic values of communities in Rivers State. It has been identified that many of the ancient building structures with cultural and historic values littered throughout the State, most have been in state of disrepair, rapidly decaying and so losing their economic values, unfortunately most of these buildings sites have not been identified. Therefore, if nothing is done in the near future, the history, culture, and heritage of many communities in the state of Rivers would be obliterated due to the extinction or nonexistence of these heritage structures.

## Recommendation

The architects and all relevant professionals in the building industries should expedite action to ensure the process of restoring and rehabilitating the heritage buildings in Rivers State.

The Rivers State Government through the Ministry of Housing and Ministry of Art, culture and tourism should ensure the identification, acquisition, restoration and listing of all heritage buildings in rivers state. The host communities of these heritage buildings needs to bring to

the notice of local and state government the condition of these heritage buildings and the need for them to be restored, maintained and possibly listed to prevent total decay and extinction. Programmes need to be anchored on radio and television stations to orientate people on importance of such buildings.

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