

# Documentation of Yorùbá Traditional Institutional Building: The Case of Àfin Irefin

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## To cite this article:

Sogbesan Oluwatoyin Zainab, Awonusi Friday Samson. Documentation of Yorùbá Traditional Institutional Building: The Case of Àfin Irefin. *International Journal of Architecture, Arts and Applications*. Vol. 8, No. 4, 2022, pp. 197-205. doi: 10.11648/j.ijaaa.20220804.13

Received: April 19, 2022; Accepted: May 7, 2022; Published: November 4, 2022

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**Abstract:** Palaces within the Yorùbá culture are important places that is perceived as the position of power after the *Orisas*. The Yorùbá town radiates around the *Oba*'s palace whose architectural style spans years of experiences and cultural elements of identity. Mainly constructed using laterite and other traditionally sourced materials, they have withstood the test of time and worthy of preservation. Remarkably, interaction with outsiders brought about changes in taste and value that tends to influence the built environment of the Yorùbá people. As a result, traditional institutional structures like Yorùbá palaces are gradually changing to vernacular, eclectic or losing their traditional elements. Sadly, the loss of these distinctive architectural elements that differentiates and identify Yorùbá palace architecture could simply translate to loss of history and heritage. To this end, this paper seeks to document the *Àfin Irefin* in Ibadan. Highlighting the importance of the palace an important traditional institutional building and emphasising the need for documentation, restoration and preservation is the focus of the paper. Utilising a historical and archival research methods, the paper seeks to document the *Àfin Irefin* of *Olubadan* and highlight its important architectural elements. Through presentation of findings, the paper emphasises the importance of the structure as a part of Yorùbá heritage that is endangered due to deterioration, change in value and lack of preservation policy.

**Keywords:** Architecture, Culture, Documentation, Yorùbá Palace, Preservation

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## 1. Introduction

Yorùbá land (*Ilè Yorùbá*) is the cultural region of the Yorùbá people in West Africa spanning the countries of Nigeria, Benin and Togo. The geo-cultural space spreads north from the Gulf of Guinea and west from the Niger River into Benin and Togo. In the northern section, Yorùbá land begins in the suburbs just west of Lokoja and continues unbroken up to the *Ogou* tributary of the Mono River in Togo. In the south, it begins in an area just west of the Benin River occupied by the *Ilaje* Yorùbá s and continues uninterrupted up to Porto Novo. The governments of these diverse people are quite intricate and each group and subgroup varies in their pattern of governance. Most of the city states were controlled by *obas*, elected priestly monarchs, and councils made up of *oloyes*, recognized leaders of royal, noble, and often even common descent, who joined them in

ruling over the kingdoms through a series of guilds and cults. Different states saw different ratios of power between the kingship and the chiefs' council.

Owning to the revered position of the *obas* as the head of the traditional institution coupled with the social and economic role they play, their residents are usually strategically located and constructed [11]. The Yorùbá palace has a multi-purpose function notably residential, religious, governmental, industrial, socio-cultural, economic, recreational and storage purposes [11, 18]. Within Yorùbá culture, the royal palace is the most distinguished residential structure and constructed with high standards to last for generations like the Oyo palace. Remarkably, till date they are still in existence across the Yorùbá cities and towns of south western Nigeria attesting to a longstanding culture and heritage of the people.

Ibadan, is one of notable historical cities of the Yorùbá nation, and serves as a conglomerate of diverse Yorùbá

ethnic groups basically consisting of *Egba*, *Ijebu*, *Oyo* and *Ife* origins among others, who agreed to stay together [8]. Thus, accounting for system of government that embraces the rotational leadership style as oppose the common hereditary structure [8]. An arrangement likely accountable for the absence of a central palace structure for *Bales in Ibadan* (title now changed to *oba*). As a result, each selected ruling class customarily convert their private residences to palaces whenever they ascend the throne as *Bale* or *Olubadan* [18]. Due to this reason, some of these palaces do not portray the architecture uniqueness of traditional *Yorùbá* palaces described by Afolabi Ojo in his book titled *Yorùbá Palaces* in 1967 and *Yorùbá* palace gardens by Falade in 1990 [11, 4]. Also, such privately converted palaces are likely to be non-existent and undocumented as part of *Yorùbá* architecture after such reign due to death or deposition. Notwithstanding the nonexistence of a dedicated palace structure in Ibadan, some notable *oba's* who have ruled as *Olubadan* in the past have taken time to construct palaces that have unique architectural elements of a *Yorùbá* palace. Such examples are the palaces of *Oluyole*, *Alesinloye*, *Ogunmola*, *Foko* and *Irefin* [18]. Among these however, *Àfin Irefin* can be said to be outstanding due to its size, location, architectural elements, materials and craftsmanship.

*Àfin Irefin* is located in the core of Ibadan a *Yorùbá* city and capital of Oyo State. Constructed in 1910 as the institutional building and residence of *Bale Ogundeji Irefin*. Ogundeji Irefin was the 23rd *Bale (Oba)* of Ibadan. The family till date hold an historical significance of being the descendants of *Oba Onirefin* who built the biggest palace in the history of Ibadan during his reign between 1912 to 1914. The palace portrays the *Yorùbá* architecture in its originality. The city of Ibadan is known for its historical landmarks of both traditional and *Yorùbá* townhouse architecture among which *Àfin Irefin* happens to be the only traditional institutional building till date. The documentation of this structure will not only serve as record for restoration and conservation purposes, but contributes to the literature on Yoruba palaces. Though Ojo covered *Yorùbá* palaces of *Ife*, *Abeokuta*, *Ijebu-Ode*, *Oyo Owo* and *Ado Ekiti*, *Àfin Irefin* is a continuation of data collection on *Yorùbá* palaces [19]. The paper will further contribute to the preservation of the historical architectural elements associated with *Yorùbá* kingship and the traditional institutional system.

## 2. Justification of Study

*Yorùbá* palaces at various stages are likely to undergo cultural transformation. While some have been able to withstand the test of cultural transformation such as palace of the *Alàfin* of *Oyo*, and *Deji* palace in *Akure*, some such as *Ito-ro* palace of *Ijebu-Ode* have gone into extinction due to neglect, disuse or replaced with modern structures without cultural underpinnings [11]. In the past traditional resources of tributes were utilized to maintain the splendor of *Yorùbá* palaces. Sadly, the withdrawal of such local resources has affected the state of traditional *Yorùbá* palaces. Consequently,

many are either dilapidated or completely wiped out due to abandonment and desire for contemporary structures [9]. Palaces in Ibadan are more threatened owing to lack of a central palace and poor management and preservation system where direct owners/families take sole responsibility of maintenance. Such maintenance falls short after the demise of the *oba* due to lack of dedicated funds. Thus, the existing palaces are faced with neglect and disuse, and some are being renovated without due consultation regarding authenticity of the elements to be conserved or replaced. Likewise, and role they play in authenticating history, identity and culture are being overlooked. Sadly, the lack of significance placed on structures with heritage status continues to ravage the country as a whole hence the urgent need to document.

*Àfin Irefin* was initially regarded as the second largest *Àfin* (palace) in the city of Ibadan, but with the demolition of *Ibikunle's* palace (considered largest) and the fragmentation of the land, *Irefin* palace is now the largest standing structure [6]. The significance of the *Àfin Irefin* is further highlighted in the utilisation of part of the palace in Nollywood movie *Saworoide* in 1999. The 112 years old palace features a typical *Yorùbá* palace setting as it was underlined with great superiority in relation to every other building within its locale. Documenting the *àfin Irefin*, is important now that it is still standing as it constitutes tangible evidence to the memory of a rapidly vanishing past [9]. Furthermore, *àfin Irefin* is not only important for historical purposes but to identify and highlight architectural tangible evidence of culture, and identity of *Yorùbá* institutional structure. Moreover, the paper will contribute to dossier of relevant *Yorùbá* architectural elements that will assist in conservation, preservation and future restoration works of palaces.

## 3. Methodology

The research is qualitative research utilising a mixed methodological approach that employs both Primary and secondary research that includes historical and archival research methods. A multi-method approach of collecting data was preferred because it adds rigour and depth to the investigation. As such, the weakness of one method might be the strength of another [5, 17]. Primary data collection was carried out through extensive site visits, personal observation and in-depth interviews that included elderly members of *Irefin* family to understand how the *Yorùbá* culture and kingship translates to the physical structure and choice of construction material of the palace. Interviews were conducted first in 2017 followed by the final part in December 2021. Existing archive of visual material that included videos were explored and analysed to ascertain the extent of documentation and restoration that has been carried out. Documents on listed buildings and site of the National Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM) was reviewed to see if the building was gazetted as a listed property worthy of preservation. Secondary sources on *Yorùbá* culture and palaces was highlighted in the literature review.

#### 4. *Àfin (palaces) in Yorùbáland*

*Àfins* (palaces) in Yorùbáland plays a significant role in the life of the Yorùbá people [9]. As part of Yorùbá institutional buildings, palaces are held in high esteem by the culture and the people. As such, palace shrines and rituals contributes to the authority they hold within the town, hence they are centrally located in the planning of Yorùbá towns [19]. They are a place for public assembly and state gods or deities and final resting place of deceased *obas*. As all power and authority lead to the divine king so is the road network and paths converge towards the *àfin* [19]. The *àfin* serves as the fountain to the culture and identity of the kingdom it governs over [12].

The place of the palace in Yorùbá land cannot be overemphasised and they are institutional structures that have withstood the test of time despite introduction of modern ideology and technology of construction. Palaces are regarded emblems of what constitutes Yorùbá architecture and in entirety the culture of the people. Reflecting their belief system on the status and sacredness of the *oba*, the perimeter of the palace grounds is usually walled. Constructed of earth, they are usual about 3feet wide and up to 12 - 18 feet in height to retain its prominence. Though conspicuous, the wall provides a sense of privacy for the *oba* according to Yorùbá culture. The wall can be easily noticed from whichever direction the palace is approached since it is situated in the middle of the town (an example is the *Alaafin*'s palace in Oyo town).

Like every Yorùbá traditional architectural construction, the palace is a reflection of an intimate association with their vegetal environment as it reflects in the use of thatch and other vegetation in their roofing [9, 19]. Before contact with the west and introduction of new construction materials, Yorùbá palaces and houses were constructed to protect the people from the weather especially rain. As a result, more attention is paid to making their structures rain proof. Adoption of the high-pitched roof allows for easy drain off of rain water. Same style roofing is adopted in a large scale for Yorùbá palaces.

The perimeter walls are often left bare and unfinished on purpose. It is left uncovered to inform the visitors and indigenes about the wealth surrounding the Yorùbá seat of power [12]. Different region have varied colour of laterite that ranges from cool reddish colour to lighter yellow that serves as identity marker. Besides the unfinished wall allows the visitor appreciate the good quality of laterite used for the construction. In some instances, the laterite elements used in constructing the wall is sometimes mixed with shear butter and palm oil instead of water thus, increasing the durability for much longer period [12].

A major architectural element of the Yorùbá palaces is the entrance gate called *oju abata*. Ojo [12] argued that the gate is usually positioned along the side of the wall facing the market-place known as *oja-oba* (king's market). The idea of the *oja oba* directly opposite the entrance gate to the palace is a common feature in Yorùbá towns. This is evident in major palaces like

that of the *Alaafin* of Oyo with an elaborately designed *oju abata*. *Oju abata* is not a mere gate or gateway but one that informs visitors about the history, identity and culture of the people as zoomorphic representations are used as decorative elements. According to Ojo [12] *oju abata* is like a tunnel connecting the outer world of the town with the inner world of the palace. In some cases, *oju abata* opens to a large open space overlooking the inner palace wall that has the entrance to the palace. In other instances, it opens to a large courtyard that serves as a communal space for different activities.

Courtyard forms one of the five major element of Yorùbá architecture [15]. Their palaces consist of many courtyards (*ka*) of varied sizes for different functions. The biggest of the numerous courtyards is designed to break the massiveness of the built-up area of the palace [12]. Sizes of the courtyards vary greatly from palace to palace and dependent on the expanse of land occupied by the palace. Palace of the *Alaafin* of Oyo in the past had 100 courtyards which has been reduce to expand the built-up area. The function of the courtyards within the Yorùbá palaces includes enhancement of private family cohesion, ventilation, lighting, food storage, stable for horses, space for settling disputes, and spaces for various deities to mention a few. The courtyards contribute to the division of spaces into zones and help maintain the private area from the public and semi-public zones. Multiplicity of courtyards (*ka*) within Yorùbá palace has become a common element of their traditional architectural design and planning.

Protruding from the main palace wall to either the major road or the main courtyard are several porches that serves as an architectural element of Yorùbá palaces [12]. The porches tend to break the monotony of the stretched rectangular shape. The courtyards are surrounded by verandas with roof supported on earthen columns or carved wooden posts. Wooden posts are another important element of Yorùbá architecture [15]. It is one element that also signifies status of the budling and the owner within the Yorùbá town. Carved posts in Yorùbá architecture are decorative elements that enhances the budling structurally and aesthetically.

The use of columns as architectural elements in Yorùbá palaces predates the contact with the west [16]. The columns were used as structural elements in carrying roofs. The importance of the column is highlighted in the Yoruba proverb that distinct various uses and types of columns. They are usually carved with inscriptions and decorative motifs that tells a story and serves as tangible reminder of beliefs and culture. Such artistic skills are carried out by designated families known as the *Olona* who are carvers charged with the duty of carving. Their works included carved wooden veranda posts and carved wooden door panels, found in palaces and house of nobles. Such works are evident in Yoruba palaces as testaments to Yoruba artistic representation ingenuity and creativity. From the choice of hardwood to the distinct motifs demands a creative skill that is second to none.

## 5. Decorative Element in Yorùbá Palace Architecture

Decorative and artistic taste of the Yorùbá people is determined by their environment, immediate society and their intangible spiritual orientation [10, 19]. As a result, Yorùbá architecture is emphasised through the use of decorative elements such as murals, motifs and carvings that indicates their religious affiliations, status and financial capability [15]. Hence, the best of *Yorùbá* decorative elements is easily identified in *palaces* as the highest structure revered aside shrines. Long before colonisation and influence, *Yorùbá* architectural main features are ornamentation in wood and carved motifs on doors and roof supports especially within palaces [1, 3, 13]. Ornamentation is reflected in architectural elements fabricated by woodcarvers such as veranda post, doors panels, fascia boards, doors and windows. Murals are also common place on the walls of palaces where animals and objects connected to divinity of the obas are depicted [12]. A good example is the *oju abata* to the Alaafin of Oyo's palace with over 300 zoomorphic murals.

*Àfin* in Yorùbá land are built to house the whole community wealth, riches, cultural artifacts, beliefs and tradition that is reflected in the ornamentation [2]. Thus, the decorative and ornamental elements found in the *Àfin* (palace) are reflections of the rank and prestige of the Oba. This structural support though artistically finished are integral and functional element of the building [12]. However, as decorative elements, they constitute master pieces of Yorùbá carvings and depicts integral part of their culture. As a result, each carved posts tells a story as it is used to record events in the absence of writing. Thus, serve as visual markers of identity and culture. In modern *Yorùbá* architecture, traditional decorative mouldings and ornamentations are nearly eliminated, paving way for a clean aesthetic where materials such as wood, brick and stone are used unornamented [3]. Hence, the tradition is gradually fading away as modern designs emerge.

## 6. The *Irefin* Palace

*Àfin Irefin* was built in the year 1910 on about 4 acres of land. It is an elaborate structure with 62 rooms contrary to 125 mentioned by the Oyo state government [14]. The four-acre palace is bounded by *Irefin oje* road and *Oke adu* road. Today *Àfin Irefin* has lost most part of the palace grounds to remain only the palace structure. The palace structure constitutes four zones surrounding four courtyards with the largest measuring about 300sqm. It is situated on a hill top that allows a good view of surrounding landscape of Ibadan from the roof terrace. Bounded by *Irefin Oje* road by the side and the main entrance (Figure 1). *Irefin Oje* road can be accessed either through two major roads - *Bashorun* gate or *oke adu* road. The main entrance consists of five gable porches that serves as a market place (Figure 2). The market is in line with Yorùbá culture where the king's market is

before the palace [12]. A position that further highlights the relationship between both institutions of authority where the market is a citadel of political power and the *Oba* is the *Oloja* and oversee all activity within it [16].



Source: google map 2022 [7]

**Figure 1.** Google map showing the site of the *Àfin Irefin* in relation to surrounding buildings porch that serves as a market place.



Source: Awonusi Collection 2017

**Figure 2.** Entrance porch that serves as a market place.



Source: Oluwatoyin Sogbesan collection 2021

**Figure 3.** Showing new entrance gate to Àfin Ireḥin.

On entry to the palace (Figure 3) is the entrance court bounded by the four sides. The courtyard serves as a public space and place for festivals, religious ceremonies as well as political and socio-cultural activities. Directly facing the public courtyard is the only story building in the palace compound (figure 4). The story building which is the focal point of the palace is the personal residence of *oba Ireḥin* and flanked by residential quarters to the left and right side. The ceremonial courtyard is bounded on two side by residential quarters for male children popularly known as boys' quarters. The ceremonial courtyard serves as a space for religious and cultural ceremonies. On the entrance side, the courtyard is bounded by the 5 gable porch which is part of the boundary fence. The residential structures of semidetached bungalows are opened to 2 other courtyards (Figure 6) linked by verandas and common corridors. This residential area served as the private apartments of the king's wives; princesses, retainers and slaves. Behind the royal quarter (Figure 7) links the king's court (*Igbejo*) opened to a courtyard that leads to the stable for horses (*ka esin*). Both the king's court and the horse stable are in deplorable state as all the earthen walls have collapsed due to lack of continuous maintenance as well as effect of weather (Figure 8).



Source: Awonusi collection 2009

**Figure 4.** Showing the single story residence of the Oba within the palace.



Source: Awonusi 2009 and Sogbesan 2021 collections of Àfin Ireḥin Ibadan

**Figure 5.** Showing Entrance into the main residence of Oba Ireḥin in 2009 and 2021.

Construction was carried out using *pise* for the walls and finished with fine earthen material that was later plastered with cement screed. Rammed earth construction technique was employed in the construction of the palace. Each course of well mixed earth is compacted and allowed to dry before another layer was added (Figure 7). Load bearing walls of 300mm thick was utilized in the construction of the bungalow structure while 450mm thickness was used in the story building.

Wood was used for interior and exterior finishes of the royal quarter. This is also indicated on the exterior through the jalousie used as shutters and exterior walls of the upper balcony of the story building (Figure 4). Wood was also used as a structural element for the first floor of the story structure. Long hardwood boards served as structural floor and floor finish of the king's residence. Sun screens over internal window opening was employed to keep sunrays at bay within the private residence. Internal partitioning as depicted in Figure 12 and two staircases within the story building were also of wooden material. Thus, highlighting the use and importance of wood in construction by the *Yorùbá* people. Wood also provided privacy and shade from sunrays and left bare as interior cladding for door openings and wall covering to present a space befitting royalty of that era and culture. (Figure 11). Thick wooden balustrades adds to the interior aesthetic for the palace since it was constructed in 1912. Some fabricated balustrades yet to be fitted are stored within the ceiling of the residential quarters (Figure 9).

The roofing rafters, trusses, and facial boards are all wooden structures whilst the roof covering is zinc corrugated roofing sheets unlike the earlier use of thatch for earlier constructed *Yorùbá* palaces. Thus, highlighting the wealth of *oba Ireḥin* at the time of construction. The exposed roofing material indicates that it was constructed using natural synthesis of imported and indigenous materials such as zinc corrugated roofing sheets, wooden timber trusses with some part showing the use of woven raffia materials for the ceiling.



Source: Awonusi Collection 2009

**Figure 6.** Showing Courtyard and part of residential area.



Source: Oluwatoyin Sogbesan collection

**Figure 10.** Showing wall thickness, wooden lintel support.



Source: Sogbesan collection 2021

**Figure 7.** Showing dilapidated part of residential quarters leading to the ka Igbejo.



Source: Oluwatoyin Sogbesan 2021

**Figure 11.** Showing wooden finished arch door way and doors.



Source: Oluwatoyin Sogbesan Collection 2021

**Figure 8.** Showing extent of dilapidation in the Ka Esin (Courtyard to stable for horses).



Sources: Oluwatoyin Sogbesan collections 2021

**Figure 12.** Showing wooden elements doors, window sunscreen, floor and decorative column.



Source: Oluwatoyin Sogbesan collection 2021

**Figure 9.** Showing carved hard wood balustrade stored since 1912 in the Aja.



Source: Oluwatoyin Sogbesan 2021

**Figure 13.** Showing wooden staircase to the royal attic only meant for oba Irefin.



Source: Oluwatoyin Sogbesan collection

**Figure 14.** Showing wooden wood.



Source: Oluwatoyin Sogbesan collection 2021

**Figure 18.** Showing wardrobe with royal crest.



Source: Oluwatoyin Sogbesan 2021

**Figure 15.** Showing an external influence on design element - jalousé window.



Source: Oluwatoyin Sogbesan 2021

**Figure 16.** Showing decorative wood finished celebratory entrance to the royal.



Source: Oluwatoyin Sogbesan 2021

**Figure 17.** Showing detail of wooden decorative entrance.

## 7. Findings and Analysis

The documentation of the *Àfin Ireḥin* highlights the important elements of Yorùbá tradition and culture and how it translates in the positioning of the palace as a ostentatious structure of authority. Regarding central positioning of Yorùbá palaces and the roads radiating from the palace to all other areas of the town, *Àfin Ireḥin* is not centrally located and road network does not radiate from the palace. The positioning of *Àfin Ireḥin* emphasizes the presence of many ruling houses within Ibadan. As a result, the kingship rotates from one family to another. Also, the absence of a central palace as mentioned earlier in the paper implies that every elected monarch is at liberty to use his personal residence as a palace like the case of *Oba Ireḥin*. The structure demonstrates how modern and indigenous building material was utilised for construction through natural synthesis. Earthen rammed walls and wooden members used with corrugated roofing zinc sheets. Thus, presenting spatial allocation that surrounded courtyards used as communal spaces for cooking, washing and relaxation. The use of courtyards expresses a major element of Yorùbá traditional architecture.

As a living heritage site, accurate measurement could not be taken as various spaces within the palace were in use by family members whose privacy needed to be respected. Though scholars claim that *Àfin Ireḥin* sits on four-acre land, only structure identified as *Àfin Ireḥin* are those within the walls of the palace. The land behind the palace is being used as refuse dump and the other part of the land is dotted with residential structures independent of the palace. With the absence of tributes, communal labour, available funds from designated authority and poor preservation policies, parts of the palace property and land are sold to acquire the necessary funds being utilised in recent minor restorative and renovation exercises such as the roofing and painting of some parts of the palace (Figure 1).

Entrance into the *Àfin Ireḥin* is somewhat secured with gates for both vehicular and pedestrian access (Figure 3) that are part of recent renovation exercise being carried out by members of the royal family. Sadly, the palace is easily

accessible by intruders through the dilapidated section at the rear of the palace and the corridor that leads to the dump site (Figure 19).



Source: Oluwatoyin Sogbesan collection 2021

**Figure 19.** Showing the pathway to the back of the palace now being used as a dump site.

The elaborate wooden finishes on the archways [14, 15] are still in good condition and will benefit from periodic maintenance to allow them last another decade. Wooden floor board are utilized on the upper floors of the *àfin Ireḥin* and some of these wooden elements like the handrails are still in good condition. However, a section of the floorboard is about to give way due to the load from the earthen wall on the first floor (Figure 20). This section of the *Oba's* quarters is in need of immediate structural attention and intervention.



Source: Oluwatoyin Sogbesan collection 2021

**Figure 20.** Showing failing first floor support in need of restorative intervention.

It is observed that in the space of 12 years, modifications have been made on the decorative moldings and introduction of more decorative elements especially at the entrance to the main residence of the residential quarter of the *oba* (Figure 5). There has also been some intervention in some parts of the palace (Figure 3) which defiled the use of original or replica of the materials initially used for construction. The present condition of the *Àfin Ireḥin* shows deterioration and collapse in some parts (Figures 7 and 8). However, the nature and types of the materials used can still be ascertained and thus

present opportunity for analysis and materials sourcing for rehabilitation works.

The palace is the only standing palace structure within Ibadan and still retains some of the features of a Yorùbá traditional institutional building as well as the position of the market in relation to the palace. It is a living heritage structure that has the capability to allow contemporary substitute to emerge as a new palace structure for Ibadan monarch.

## 8. Conclusion

Palaces in the Yorùbá culture holds an important place in the life of the people and history of the town. They are visual construct that informs about the identity and culture it represents. It is the highest form of institutional building of Yorùbá architecture and is highly revered as a sacred place of authority besides shrines of deities. The elements of Yorùbá architecture are emphasised and easily noticed but endangered with contemporary designs replacing old Yorùbá palaces. In the absence of a palace in Ibadan, and the drive to construct a new structure will contribute to loss of history identity and unique culture hence the need to document *àfin Ireḥin*. Though constructed in 1912 on 4 acres of land, the *àfin Ireḥin* presently lacks surrounding grounds befitting a palace. However, the main structure and residential quarters continues to emphasise identity, history and culture associated with kingship in Yorùbáland. Elements that constitute Yorùbá institutional architecture are still highlighted within the structure.

Lack of policies encouraging documentation and restoration of heritage buildings that includes palaces of old towns has led to the dilapidated state of the property. Also, restrictions on tributaries have left families and close relatives in the helms of affairs regarding preservation of old palaces. With lack of funds and necessary professional support, the families can only do so much in preserving heritage buildings. Therefore, *àfin Ireḥin* stand the chance of further deterioration if drastic measures to conserve and protect is not carried out on time. Although the present condition of *àfin Ireḥin* shows deterioration and collapse in some important spaces it is still constitutes importance structure as a Yorùbá palace. Thus, a condition assessment of the palace will be required to ascertain the level of deterioration and propose proper conservation management plan.

Sadly, in Nigeria like many African countries, heritage properties that highlight indigenous building practices are yet to be given adequate protection due to contemporary construction works and urban renewal. *Àfin Ireḥin* has probably been able to survive the developmental pressure because it is a living heritage and the status and care accorded it by the family. Hence, most of the key heritage features of the palace which are still in place needs adequate traditional and legal protection. Furthermore, adaptive and compatible use of the palace will also enhance its continuous preservation.

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