
**Investigating the Peculiarities and Significance of Socio-Spirituality of
Architecture and Landscaping**

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Abstract. The research aims to investigate the impact of architecture and landscape on the emotional and spiritual sensibilities of residents' experience during the practices of worship and prayer. For as long as humans have designed spaces, they have done so to meet basic physical needs and pursue higher aspirations, including spiritual and intellectual. In the pre-modern times, spaces for worship were designed to enhance spiritual worship and aid the gathering of worshippers, though they are less prevalent now. To achieve the aim of the study, the paper explored the qualitative approach using precedent studies of existing structures of church convention centers. The literature addressed the peculiarities and significance of the church convention centre, the impact of architecture and landscape design on the socio-spiritual life of the church, and enhancing socio-spirituality through landscaping and architecture. Findings from the study revealed the importance and experience of worshippers during worship and prayer. The paper recommends that there be proper zoning of spaces and adequate structural landscaped elements be provided; the proper use of acoustic materials and a symbolic building would attract the worshippers.

Keywords: Convention Centre, Landscaping, Peculiarities and Socio-Spirituality

Introduction

The terms landscape, landscape architecture and landscape design, according to Ayeni (2012), are words often used about the shaping, beautification and modification of the built and natural environment. However, Landscape over time has been an important tool in the development of environment and a sustainable landscape should be designed to be both attractive and in balance with the local climate and the environment. Landscape designs vary depending on how the Landscape will be used, as Cadenasso and Pickett (2008) discussed. Though the principles of Landscape are the same, a homeowner who wants an aesthetically pleasing, low-maintenance landscape would create a very different design from that of a passionate gardener whose primary purpose in life is to spend time in the garden. Nature in its self provides a good setting for meditation and spiritual inspiration; a blend of well-ordered landscaping and building structure will contribute to the effectiveness of the prayer and spiritual life of the users. Landscape architects can make a unique offering to community and individual wellbeing through addressing the scarcity of spaces designed for the transcendent by incorporating elements in the Landscape that allow for a greater chance of experiencing the transcendent.

Architecture is capable of enhancing spiritual development by manipulating the vital parameter of inspirational settings, such as; Thermal comfort level, outdoor landscaping and enrichment, the building form and the Noise level. Nkwogu (2001) stated that architecture whose exterior forms and interiors space delight the eyes also elevate and enrich the mind and ennoble the spirit. In addition, Nkwogu (2001) posited that those evocative forms provoke an emotional response in the observer. The study focuses on how the landscaping of places of worship becomes sacred and how it affects practices of prayer and worship. The study investigates the peculiarities and significance of landscapes of spiritual prayer camps and evaluates the influence and impact of architecture and Landscape on the emotional and spiritual sensibilities of experience during the practices of worship and prayer. The issues faced are

determined by the spiritual qualities that architecture can bring to create space for the engagement of programs and events for the entire church through design and landscaping.

Literature Review

Peculiarities and Significance of Church Convention Centre

Convention Centers characteristically have at least one auditorium, and may also comprise meeting rooms, conference rooms, resorts and hotels and lecture hall; some large resorts and hotels include a Convention Centre. Furthermore, dedicated meeting and breakaway rooms are designed for maximum output, and in order to minimize distractions, these rooms tend to be separated from food service facilities and high-traffic areas. Such layout encourages interaction and networking among attendees and those participating in different meetings. Separate dining facilities are usually made available to house conference groups on a flexible meeting schedule at the suitability of each group and to house the capacity of the conference facility and lunch (TGCSA, 2013). A *Convention Centre* can be defined as a large building designed to hold a convention, where individuals and groups meet to promote and share mutual interests. Convention Centers typically offer adequate floor areas to accommodate numerous attendees.

As posited by Lane End (2018), the first convention centers can be traced back to mid-19th century Britain, commonly known as exhibition halls; the centers were designed to bring together people to discuss and explore their mutual interest in a subject (Lawson, 2017). These buildings often covered several acres and were multi-functional, usually having: lecture halls, libraries, galleries, theatres and exhibition areas. Convention centers are places where people from across the globe meet and therefore cannot be seen as massive sheds that house events, but it is instead as places where architecture and people meet and interact with one another. Like stadiums and theatres, convention centers deal with an architecture of gathering. They are structures that house events, where openness is created, only to be filled with activity (TGCSA, 2013). A church Convention center needs to be inspirational and spiritual enough to generate respect and create a divine feeling; otherwise, it loses its purpose. The Convention center as a whole, also being a place for heavenly worship, will artistically signify the truths of religion and the exaltation of God and his saint. Historically, convention can be traced back to Greece. The city of Sparta utilized convention for health and fitness, while Athens used it for socials. Hitler used Jugend camps to train young Germans to serve a national purpose. Mattson (1980) documented that the first church camp was by the Rev. George W. Hinkey in 1880 when he took seven boys on a convention trip to Gardner's Island near Wakefield, Rhode Island. Nash (1982) reported that Judea Christians used wilderness sojourn for retreat and purification, as did their sages (Moses, Isaac, John the Baptist, and the Lord Jesus Christ). Convention offers several privileges, including Respite from daily routine businesses; Freedom from distraction and disturbance; Full concentration and meditation; Fellowship and family life with others; Self-discovery and focusing; Prayer and renewal; Inspiration and revelation; Counselling and teaching.

In contemporary times, the convention takes the form of retreat and cuts across all strata of the society; Churches, politicians and governmental institutions are employing it. The environmental setting is being modified to enhance the convenience and eventual outcome. Omotade (2002) stressed the requirement for Christian convention, arguing that convention architecture should reward guest expectation of escaping everybody's environments to "a place apart"; thus, it should be a place that will leave a lasting impression in the minds of conventioners.

Impact of Architectural and Landscape Design on Socio-Spiritual Life of the Church

Architecture can influence our day-to-day existence, from the daily act of pressing a door handle to entering into a light-washed room; as Goethe has stated, 'One should not seek anything behind the phenomena, because they are lessons themselves (Holl, 1999). The church building on its own carries a message according to Warner (2007), it should be seen as an invitation, not a barrier, as there is the hunger for spiritually expressive buildings that have a sense of sacred space, without the absence of Christian symbols. Furthermore, Hexham (2006) argues that the wonders of the Christian faith should be embedded in the buildings. The rise of mega-churches is pronounced among the evangelicals, from which the Pentecostals came into being (Crosbie, 2005). The architecture of these churches is usually untraditional, often avoiding Christian symbols, believing that; the church does not want to remind potential congregations of traditional Christianity. They want to offer a friendly, familiar, non-churchlike atmosphere (Crosbie, 2005).

Zumthor (2010) exposed that small and large, inspiring and significant buildings or complexes oppress or exclude; in addition, there are also buildings or groups of buildings, both small and massive, that make some feel good, look good, give a sense of dignity and freedom, and make one want to stay awhile. The church is seen as an intervening force (Logan, 2008), an island of urbanity and a means of enriching spiritual lives (Hexham, 2006), a centre that accommodates those who come to worship, and symbolically big enough for God to join the service (Crosbie, 2005). Natural elements are an essential part of any sacred landscape of any city. Spiritual values are associated with gardens, ancient trees, mounds, coasts, riverbanks, forests, stones, depending on the meaning of that particular culture. The black stones of Mecca, the river stream of Varansi, Mount Garzim in Palestine show how landscape elements can construct a sacred image of an urban landscape (Saha, Sobhan & Nahyan, 2020).

In the account of Christian faith, landscape and spirituality are frequently intertwined. Landscaping draws man to nature; it affects the mind towards his creator, which enhances spiritual worship. How well we go deep in worship depends, in part, on how we have prepared our minds (Richardson, 2017). As delineated by Dewsbury and Cloke (2009), the notion of spiritual landscapes draws several similarities with such theorization of religious experience, namely, rejecting a Cartesian split between mind and body and instead emphasizing the decentred body, the performative power of object-subject relations in mediating religious experience. However, Dewsbury and Cloke (2009) seek to extend such theorizations of religious experience by arguing for an immanent spirituality; this emphasizes the significance of belief in shaping the capacity of the body to be affected in ways that can produce an alternative way of experiencing the world. This is not to suggest that belief is somehow detached from, or before, technologies of mediation; but rather, belief becomes wrapped into an experience of the sensory world. This is done in ways that adapt the sensory capacities of the body, and it also opens up a discernment capable of registering presences that resonate outside the enforcements of the everyday. In this way, belief in the presence and power of 'something other than the present material world around us' (Dewsbury & Cloke, 2009) leads to certain things happening that would not; otherwise, people experience genuine and specific feelings. As urban landscape could transfer some information to the human mind through visual senses and could stimulate people's imaginations, it could hence affect visual perceptions of citizens of the environment and change their behaviours (Azma & Katanchi, 2017).

Worship practices can include a 'formal' practice of public worship, singing and prayer and a much more everyday sensibility towards God that does not need unique occasions/events/spaces. Therefore, there is the need to consider ways of enhancing inspiration, creating a joyful environment and giving occupants a healthy breath, good appearance and natural beauty through architecture and landscaping.

While individuals interpret space differently, some generalizations can be made about space's emotional responses or feelings and characteristics that stimulate them.

a) Satisfaction: when spatial strata and element of space relate to one another the space feel unified or resolved. When its character is also appropriate to intended use and context, a feeling of satisfaction is evoked.

b) Spirituality: scale exaggeration vertical thrusting to heaven basic geometric shapes pure white colour excessively smooth texture shaft of light stimulates spiritually.

c) Serenity and solemnity completed resolved relationship combine with dark receding colours of low saturation can include solemnity introspection and encourage one to reflect.

Recognizing that spaces designed for worship "can differently open capacities and affective atmospheres of the sacred, while simultaneously, circumscribe such capacities because of expected outcomes and contrived participatory 'manners,'" Williams (2016) also explored how spirituality played out in a semi-monastic Pentecostal community providing treatment for drug addiction. Notably, such spaces led to feelings of *disconnection* for those who were disengaged from the 'mandatory nature of worship space' (Williams, 2010), which raises important questions about the ambiguous role of spirituality in the therapeutic landscapes of such marginalized populations.

Regarding how church membership can impact health, Miller (2013) suggests that a spiritual community can improve one's life, as many spiritual traditions encourage participation in a community. Spiritual fellowship, such as attending church, can be a source of social support, which may provide a sense of belonging, security, and community. Strong relationships have been demonstrated to increase well-being and strengthen life expectancy.

Enhancing Socio-Spirituality through Landscaping and Architecture

Defining what establishes Spirituality and how it relates to Architecture is a thought-provoking task. Hence, Spirituality is defined as referring to a heightened or alternative state of mind. Spirituality involves acknowledging that there is something superior to oneself, something more to being human than sensory experience (Maya, 2012). One of the biggest perks of social Spirituality comes when people combine the best of both worlds. Organized spiritual retreats are suitable for this because they allow attendees to take some time to themselves to contemplate and engage in deep, introspective thinking. After everyone in a group has done this, the group can share experiences. This is when significant growth can happen. Individual Spirituality is given its place, but the solitary experiences are augmented by the opportunity to share, listen, give feedback and receive feedback from like-minded individuals (Buzzle Staff, 2018).

Although sharing Spirituality in safe social settings can be an enriching and valuable experience, spiritual solitude still has its place. Isolation in nature, silent, inward meditation and private introspection are all integral to getting in touch with your inner self and learning to appreciate your spiritual side. For that reason, many spiritual retreats develop schedules or programs that incorporate ample time to be alone and think about spiritual matters. Additionally, silent meditation may be done in a room with several other meditating people without greatly hindering the experience (Buzzle Staff, 2018). Socio-spirituality is the gathering of like-minded people for a spiritual purpose.

The concept of Spirituality is complete with intricate and diverse meanings. It is used lightly in contexts as different as religion, architecture, music, painting, literature, philosophy and alchemy, and spiritualism, prediction, mysterious knowledge.

Element of Spirituality in Architecture

Architecture that incorporates, accommodates and expresses Spirituality according to Swami (2004), includes:

1. A Place that is built to symbolize religious belief and facilitate rites
2. A Place that is built for separation from the mundane.
3. A Place with significant cultural meaning as recognised by archaeological, historical, or literacy evidence as well as by a community.
4. Ancient places viewed by modern culture as possessing accessible, through the knowledge that is applicable to day.
5. A Place where the potential for epiphany is viewed as favourable.
6. A Place revealed through some argement to be holy or where a significant event occurred.
7. A Place where earth energies are believed to meet.
8. The act of creating spiritual places through Architecture as a media of spiritual growth.

Spirituality is a tool that can enhance a living environment. Spiritual architecture is used to deliver the message of the inner self and inner peace. On an individual level, Spirituality is the ultimate resolution to know about self-attain oneness; if not, it is the meeting point of human and nature at a subtle medium (Swami, 2005).

Spirituality was traditionally a part of religious doctrines. It was an aspect that was seen as religious experiences. Some people see Spirituality in the same plane as religion. Secularism in Spirituality has led people to view Spirituality as a personalized issued which is less structured and is hardly open an enlightened being is one who has known the truth that man, God, and the universe are three aspects of one reality, and thus he is part and parcel of the Divine. His inner nature is pure consciousness filled with love, silence, bliss and other virtues. The enlightened being known that his center is immortal and free from all forms of sorrow, though it resides in a mortal body. Today, an enlightened being is a rare gem. Religion has two aspects: the gross and the subtle. Symbols, parables, scriptures, rites and rituals reflect the external and the gross form of religion. They are concrete, while inner divine feelings, prayer, worship, devotion, and other experiences constitute religion's abstracts and subtle form.

Swami (2000) maintains that religion is not God, but the understanding of religion can guide the seeker to a direction that leads to God. Man has mistaken the map for the destination, which is a high greatest delusion. Man is therefore responsible for this state of affairs. The solution to the problem is within him.

It is essential to go beyond religion to attain God. Spiritually, it means that one must use religion as a means and surpass it. Unfortunately, people are stuck with the means and believe that the end is a paradise for them. However, this is an illusion, not reality. Human beings adapt to the different conditions of environments; physical, social and spiritual. Man lives in an environment of beauty that he seldom acknowledges owing to human arrogance. Natural beauty induces reverent feelings about the spirit. The human spirit can be a vessel in transcending influences to shape and nourish the unique environment. The world is currently stirred by social disharmony that causes stress, psychological and hormonal imbalances that propagate illnesses. Beautiful places are ecological and foster good health. They are plenty of integrity, wholeness and balance. Architecture is a medium through which experience through space becomes pleasurable. Hence architecture cannot be isolated from its environment. Its component becomes the whole environment of the inner space it creates inside a building, while it represents part of the surroundings on the exterior. Some buildings show their dominance or nature while theirs follow a contour, path or field boundary. As such, the building creates boundaries in space. If forms, shapes and lines are accentuated with the qualities of movement, life, harmony and dynamic forces, the place can influence the human mind (Day, 2004). In a deeper perspective, human consciousness can be shaped by the place's positive effects on health, social and personal evolution. Day (2004) affirms that architecture is a medium that can be wisely developed to minimize ecological damage and pollution. Aesthetic measures do not relate simply to the sensory and visual experience but also build the essence of the spirit of place (Day, 2004).

Eco-Friendly Landscape Element and Convention Center

Landscape architecture can be defined as the art and science of designing exterior areas to improve visual appeal and functionality (DCE, 1999). A beautiful and functional landscape enhances home comfort and enjoyment and increases house value, and conserves energy. Landscape architecture is multidisciplinary of different fields of knowledge that combines various artistic, technical, and scientific sphere aspects such as visual arts, design, descriptive geometry, history and architecture theory, urbanism, fundamental notions of botany, pedagogy, hydrology, sociology, economics (Almusaed, 2018).

Eco-friendly means earth-friendly or not damaging to the environment. This term most frequently refers to products that donate to green living or practices that help preserve resources like water and energy. Eco-friendly products prevent contributions to air, water and land pollution. One can engage in eco-friendly habits or practices by being more conscious of how one uses resources. Eco-friendly building material increases the efficiency of energy used and decreases the impact on human well-being and the environment. Eco-friendly materials upsurge the value of a home (Ogunsote, 2012). Fadamiro (2000) posited that the provision of outdoor space in physical development is essential as an extension of indoor space and an integral contribution to the quality of life in the neighbourhood. Landscaping depends on the availability of such relevant natural resources as natural water type of bedrock existing plant species building or scene of architectural and historical interest, all of which should be used to be the best advantage.

Importance of Landscape

The industrial revolution of the 18th century and the subsequent improved urbanization processes in Western countries have created an artificial environment that became very uncomfortable for many city dwellers at a particular point (Efobi & Anierobi, 2014). In this period of swift urbanization in Nigeria, landscaping is one of the economic ways of moderating the harsh effects on the urban environment; it improves our urban areas' micro-climate and aesthetic quality. Landscaping has a role to play in developing our urban environment in this period of swift urbanization in the country. Landscaping is the implementation for urban improvement, which aims at improving the beauty and aesthetic quality of the environment for the use of humankind (Efobi & Anierobi, 2014).

Landscaping in a building is of great importance to residential, administrative, public and civic buildings. An appropriate landscape and strategically planned trees will serve as shades and reduce the air temperature of the building. Adjusting the surrounding climate and irradiance reduction gained from plants is essential in reducing energy usage in space cooling. A landscape feature could provide several cultural ecosystem services, including recreational, aesthetic, future, heritage, and spiritual values, but also have different values such as recreational value, spiritual, educational and aesthetics for different people. Landscaping also conglomerates elements of art and science to create a functional, aesthetically pleasing extension of indoor living to the outdoors. One original purpose of landscape design is to balance man's technology (house or building) into the natural surroundings. The landscape horticulturist must have a working knowledge of art elements and design philosophies to work towards a required landscape design. Landscape in a building interior helps to provide a counter attraction within the enclosure for inward-facing rooms to compensate for the loss of external views. The range of features that may be provided extends from hard paving and man-made sculptures to gardens, lawn, fountain pools, and parklands through landscaping. In each case, the surroundings are used to enhance individual character and interest to the premises while at the same time satisfying functional requirements.

Other economic benefits can be generated like low energy intake with energy saving electrical appliances, lightning bulbs, home designs, and locations; and through landscaping

energy solutions such as solar panels and wind turbines, which produce electricity unconventionally from utility companies (Adedeji, 2012). It also guides the building away from unwanted solar gains and reorients the wind from blowing, which improves the quality of life for the users and visitors using the building.

A successful setting is designed to promote intended use and desired behaviour. It achieved rapport with its physical and cultural context. It explores people-environment relationships that promote a landscape of high relevance and deep meaning. Placeless is the mental construct of the temporal-spatial experience as the individual ascribed meaning to setting through environmental perception. It is the ability of the setting to evoke strong mental image and be remembered over extended periods of time.

Summarily, technological advancement has brought about many changes to the built environment. It has created an avenue for social change, thus making it easier for people to communicate and relate. There are now reasons for a large-scale gathering of people coming together for different reasons, including musical concerts, sport, conferences, exhibitions, and religious gatherings. Therefore, there is the need to generate facilities that can meritoriously house these requirements. A convention centre is a large building designed to hold a convention where entities and groups promote and share mutual interests. Convention Centers typically offer adequate floor areas to accommodate numerous attendees. Convention can be traced back to Greece. The city of Sparta utilized convention for health and fitness, while Athens used it for socials. In contemporary times, the convention takes the form of retreat and cuts across all strata of society. Churches, politicians and governmental institutions are employing it. The environmental setting is being modified to enhance the convenience and eventual outcome.

The church is an intervening force, a center accommodating those who come to worship and symbolically big enough for God to join the service. The church building on its own should carry its message; it should be seen as an invitation, not an obstacle, as there is a hunger for spiritually expressive buildings that have a sense of sacred space, with the presence of Christian symbols of which Architecture holds power to inspire and transform our day-to-day existence both in and outside the church.

Landscape architecture is the art and science of designing exterior areas to improve visual appeal and functionality. Landscaping is the implementation for urban improvement which objective is improving the beauty and aesthetic quality of the environment for the use of humankind. Landscaping draws man to nature; it affects the mind towards his creator, which enhances spiritual worship. How well we go deep in worship depends, in part, on how we have prepared our minds. The Convention center as a whole, as well as a place for divine worship, will pleasingly represent the truths of religion and glorify God and his saint. Therefore, there is the need to consider ways of enhancing inspiration, creating a joyful environment and giving occupants a healthy breath, good appearance and natural beauty through architecture and landscaping. This paper focuses on investigating the peculiarities and significance of landscapes of spiritual prayer camps and evaluating the influence and impact of architecture and landscape on the emotional and spiritual sensibilities residents experience during worship and prayer. The issues faced are determined by the spiritual qualities that architecture can bring to create space for the engagement of programs and events for the entire church through design and landscaping.

Research Methodology

In achieving the objectives of this research, a qualitative approach was used to carry out the research and used two sources of data collection, the Primary and secondary sources. The primary source were direct observation, Case, and oral interview to obtain direct user input with a view to elicit vital information about the subject matter. The secondary sources used information from literature reviews which includes research works published in journals,

relevant textbooks, newspapers, literature notes, internet (eBooks) as well as documentaries. It also involved precedent studies of existing structures relating to the research, where the researcher visited and analyzed similar structures to establish the design requirements, consideration, concept, identifying the excellence and shortcomings of the research, this served as a guide in the research, providing possible solutions to the research problem. The case studies for this study are; Canaan land; Faith Tabernacle, Ota, Ogun state, Nigeria and Mount Carmel Prayer Mountain, Ife-wara, Osun state, Nigeria. These were purposively chosen to achieving the objectives of this research, a qualitative approach was used to carry out the research and used two sources of data collection, the Primary and secondary sources. The primary source was a direct observation, Case, and oral interview to obtain direct user input to elicit vital information about the subject matter. The secondary sources used literature reviews, including research works published in journals, relevant textbooks, newspapers, literature notes, the internet (eBooks), and documentaries. It also involved precedent studies of existing structures relating to the research, where the researcher visited and analyzed similar structures to establish the design requirements, consideration, concepts, identifying the excellence and shortcomings of the research; this served as a guide in the research, providing possible solutions to the research problem. The case studies for this study are; Canaan land, Faith Tabernacle, Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria and Mount Carmel Prayer Mountain, Ife-wara, Osun state, Nigeria. These were purposively chosen due to the design facilities (See figures 1 and 2)



Figure 1. Canaan Land: Approach view of Faith Tabernacle
(Source: Researchers' field survey (2019))



Figure 2. Mount Carmel Prayer Mountain: aerial view
Source: Researchers' field survey (2019)

Conclusion

This research shed more light on the peculiarities and significance of landscapes of spiritual prayer camp and also evaluate the influence and impact of architecture and landscape on the emotional and spiritual sensibilities residents experience during the practices of worship and prayer. The end product of this study is the enhancement of socio-spiritual convention centre through landscaping and architecture to meet the requirements of a convention centre of the Church and architecture at large. Facilities must be functioning correctly and functioning in all ramifications; due to the observation, users must adhere strictly to the basic guidelines and discussions made in the recommendations of this research. Finally, research like this will serve as a basis for future studies in this direction for architecture and allied professionals and can serve other spiritual and circular purposes for the school and the community.

Recommendation

The following recommendations are essential to improve the socio-spiritual qualities that architecture can bring to create space for the engagement of programs and events for the entire Church through design and landscaping. There should be proper zoning of spaces into the administrative, chapels, main auditorium, public car park, and accommodation area. Provision of adequate structural landscaped elements like a water fountain, garden and concrete seats could be used. The design should ease both pedestrian and vehicular movement. There should be the proper use of acoustic materials in the interior spaces, and adequate car park facilities should be provided. The form of the building should be symbolic and well-articulated, which would attract the worshippers when programs are called. Convention centre design should be environmentally friendly with day-lightning, good landscaping and attractive exterior and interior finishes.

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