

## A Study of Listing of Buildings and Monuments in Nigeria (1956-2009)

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### Abstract

This paper presents an analysis of listed buildings, objects and structures in Nigeria. A study of listed buildings, objects and structures was undertaken to examine their number and condition. The paper discussed the importance of listed buildings to the environment in terms of architectural, historic and cultural significance. It examined the location, criteria and level of preservation and maintenance of such buildings, objects and structures in Nigeria. The study further looked at the origin of listing, listing in Britain and other parts of the world. Listing across the six geo-political zones of Nigeria was also undertaken through direct observation and review of collated data from relevant agencies in charge of listing of buildings in Nigeria. The research made some recommendations that will assist in the preservation of Nigeria's cultural heritage and sense of identity. The study concludes that the regulatory body which is the National Commission for Museum and Monuments should take the opportunity of securing and preserving these buildings, objects and structures for the benefits of the wider generation to experience the buildings, objects and structures that have been declared as National figures in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** *cultural heritage, environment, historic building, listed building, museum and monuments*

### 1. Introduction

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. 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.

#### 1.1 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.

#### 1.2 Criteria for listing a building

Before a building is chosen for listing, some criteria have to be followed which 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 demonstrates 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.

## 2. 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.

### 2.1 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 as evident in fig.1 below;

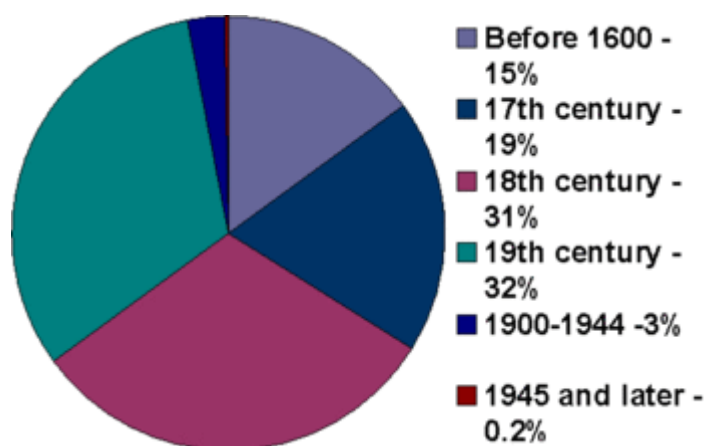


Fig.1 Age range of listed buildings in the UK

Source: heritage.org.uk (2004)

This figure shows how long Britain had started listing buildings and monuments. In England according to

heritage.org.uk (2004), 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 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### *2.2 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 Athena (1997) 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.

## **3. 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.

### *3.1 De-Listings of Buildings*

The reason for listing of buildings has already been established however the fact that a building has been listed does not mean that it would forever be a listed building or structure. The process of listing of a building does not allow for any form of formal appeal at the moment of listing according to heritage.org.uk (2004). It further stated that in Britain the owner of the building or structure may at any time inform the secretary of state with evidence that his building does not possess the architectural or historical interest as identified. It is deductable from this that a listed structure or building can be de-listed if the structure is no longer of special interest as earlier thought or it gets destroyed. It could also be de-listed if the information supplied initially is found to faulty or

misrepresented.

### 3.2 Research Methodology

The research is part of a building maintenance study carried out on public buildings in Nigeria. The questions the researchers sought to answer are derived from the objectives which have been stated earlier and this was done through direct observation and review of collated data from relevant agencies in charge of listing of buildings in Nigeria. The choice of a direct observation survey was to allow for the researcher to locate some of the buildings and monuments listed in the list provided by the relevant agencies and to allow for proper assessment which cannot be gotten if a questionnaire were to be used. The limitation with this method is the cost involved with the research and the time consumed in travelling to access the data and also to locate the building or monuments. The research covered the whole of Nigeria and this was broken down to the six geo-political zones namely;

- i. South – South geographical zone
- ii. South – East geographical zone
- iii. South – West geographical zone
- iv. North – Central geographical zone
- v. North – East geographical zone
- vi. North – West geographical zone

In each geo-political zone two listed buildings or monuments were examined and one is presented for discussion. The research lasted a period of twenty-four weeks from the date the first visit was paid to the National commission for Museums and Monuments. The data collected was collated and entered into a computer system by the authors, the data was analysed using the Microsoft Excel programme. The results were produced in tables and some selected buildings were chosen for discussion.

### 3.3 Discussion of Results

The analysis of listed buildings in Nigeria was carried out to determine the number and type of listed buildings and historical sites in the country. The analysis sought to establish (a) the number of listed buildings in each state (b) the category of buildings being listed and (c) the continuity in the documentation of listed buildings and historical sites by the Commission across the country. The list as compiled by the National Commission for Museums and Monuments is examined below according to the six geo-political zones.

The geopolitical zones are north-central, north-east, and north-west, south-south, south-west, and south-east geo-political zones (figure 2). The zones and their states of coverage are indicated in fig. 2.

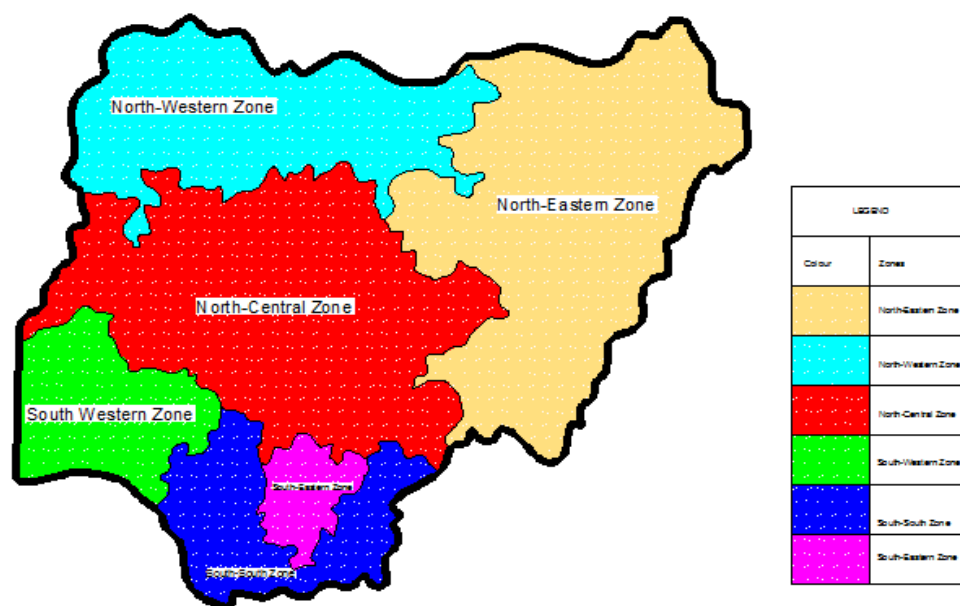
#### 3.3.1 Listed Buildings and Monuments in South – South Zone of Nigeria.

Listed buildings in this zone reveal that two states did not have historical sites. Two public and four private buildings are listed. A historical wall, a statue and two curved structures are listed. There is no recently listed structure among the historical buildings of this zone. Fig. 3.1 shows an old residence, Calabar (River State).

#### 3.3.2 Listed Buildings and Monuments in South – East Zone of Nigeria.

The listed buildings here reflect a temple and three residential buildings owned by individuals. A palace is the only public building listed in this zone. Three states ( Anambra, Ebonyi and Imo) had no listed buildings and the dates of those listed in Abia and Enugu states, did not include recently listed structures. Figure 3.2 is the Obu house in Elu-Ohafia in Abia state.

Figure2: Map of Nigeria Showing the six geo-political zones.



Source: Authors, 2010.

Table I: Listed Buildings and Monuments in South – South Zone of Nigeria.

SN	LOCATION	LISTED BUILDING	DATE OF LISTING
1	Akwa Ibom	NIL	
2	Bayelsa	NIL	
3	River	King Jaja's statue, Opobo	14/08/1959
4	Delta	Chief Nana's House, Koko	02/08/1990
5	Cross River	The Old Residency, Calabar	23/04/1959
		The Old Consulate, Calabar.	Destroyed and converted to presidential lodge in 1987
		Chief Ekpo Bassey's House, Calabar	14/08/1959
		Carved Monoliths at Emaghabe	19/03/1963
6	Edo	Carved Monoliths at Alot	19/03/1963
		Chief Ogiamien's House, Benin city	26/05/1959
		Chief Enogie's House Obasagbon, Benin-city	01/06/1961
		Benin City walls	01/06/1961

Source: National commission for Museums and Monuments (2009)



Fig. 3.1 Old residence Calabar (Cross-Rivers State)

Source: Authors, 2010

Table II: Listed Buildings and Monuments in South – East Zone of Nigeria

SN	LOCATION	LISTED BUILDING	DATE OF LISTING
1	Abia	Chief Okoroji's House at Arochukwu	19/03/1963
		Obu House Elu-Ohafia	19/03/1963
		Omo Uku Temple, Asaga –Ohafia	
		Chief Ochu Kalu's House Ndi Okereke, Abam near Bende	19/03/1963
		Chief Odo Nwokolo's Palace, Ukehe	15/12/1964
2	Enugu		
3	Anambra	NIL	
4	Ebonyi	NIL	
5	Imo	NIL	

Source: National commission for Museums and Monuments (2009)



Fig. 3.2 Obu house Elu-Ohafia (Abia State)

Source: Authors, 2010

### 3.3.3 *Listed Buildings and Monuments in South – West Zone of Nigeria.*

Monumental Buildings in this zone show some variety of different categories of buildings. Two shrines and three historical sites; three private residential buildings and four public buildings are among the listed buildings. Two states, Oyo and Ekiti, have no record of listed building. Oyo state with Ibadan as the capital is one of the oldest cities in Nigeria, did not list its numerous traditional and historical structures. In fig. 3.3 is the Elephant house (Lagos State listed in 1982.

### 3.3.4 *Listed Buildings and Monuments in North – Central Zone of Nigeria.*

There are eleven historical sites in this zone, three public buildings and a place of worship. Two states (Benue and Nasarawa) are without listed buildings. There is also an absence of newly listed buildings in the zone.

### 3.3.5 *Listed Buildings and Monuments in North – East Zone of Nigeria.*

Table V shows the distribution of the listed buildings across the states in this zone. There are five historical sites, two private residential buildings and no listed public building in this zone. Places of worship are conspicuously absent among the listed buildings.

### 3.3.6 *Listed Buildings and Monuments in North – West Zone of Nigeria.*

Table VI shows the distribution of five historical sites and two places of worship. Two states (Kebbi and Zamfara) have no listed buildings and there are no public and private residential buildings listed in the zone.

Table III: Listed Buildings and Monuments in South – West Zone of Nigeria.

SN	LOCATION	LISTED BUILDING	DATE OF LISTING
1	Ekiti	NIL	
2	Ogun	Sungbo’s Shrine @ Oke-Eri, Ijebu-Ode	15/12/1964
3	Ondo	Igbara Oke Petroglyph	19/03/1963
4	Oyo	NIL	
5	Osun	Ita Yemoo, Ile –Ife	20/02/1959
		Igbajo Stone Figure	05/08/1964
		Oshun Shrine Osogbo	05/08/1964
		Oshun – Market Shrine, Osogbo	05/08/1964
		Oshun shrine @ the Palace of Ataoja of Osogbo	15/12/1964
6	Lagos	Iloja Bar	05/04/1956
		Old Iga Oba’s Palace building, Iga-Idun Ganran	15/12/1964
		The water House @ No. 12 kakawa st., Lagos	-undated
		Old Secretariat Building Marina, Lagos	
		Elephant House	06/08/1982
		A Brazilian Style House @ No. 10 Elias st., Lagos	-undated
			-undated

Source: National commission for Museums and Monuments (2009)



Fig. 3.3 Elephant house (Lagos State)

Source: Authors, 2010



Table IV: Listed Buildings and Monuments in North- Central Zone of Nigeria.

SN	LOCATION	LISTED BUILDING	DATE OF LISTING
1	<b>Benue Kaduna</b>	NIL	
		Street Foot bridge, Kaduna	16/02/1956
		Kufena Hills, Zaria	17/07/1956
		Habe Mosque, Maigana, Zaria	15/12/1964
2	<b>Kwara</b>	Zaria City walls	-
		The relics of steamer Dayspring @ Jebba station.	15/08/1957
		Old West African Force Fort, Okuta	23/04/1959
		Old west African frontier force @ Yashikera	23/04/1959
		Stone Images at Essie	
3	<b>Kogi</b>	Stone figure at Ijara	19/03/1963
		Ate Ogun Tumulus, Palace of Ata of Idah	05/08/1964
4	<b>Nasarawa</b>	NIL	15/12/1964
5	<b>Niger</b>	Tsoede's Tomb @ Gwangade	15/12/1964
		The Katamba, Etsu muhammed's Palace, Bida	-undated
		Government House, Zungeru	13/02/1962
6	<b>Plateau</b>	Site of Mai Jiminals' house, Wushishi	13/02/1962
		The Stone -built cause -way @ Forof, Bokkos.	16/02/1956
		The Stone -built cause -way @ Batura, Bokkos.	16/02/1956
		Kwandon Kaya (cairn of stone) @ Panshanu	16/02/1956.

Source: National commission for Museums and Monuments (2009)

Table V: Listed Buildings and Monuments in North – East Zone of Nigeria.

SN	LOCATION	LISTED BUILDING	DATE OF LISTING
1	Adamawa	World heritage site, Sukur.	December, 1999
	Borno	Rabeh's House Dikwa	23/04/1959
2	Bauchi	Rock paintings Dutsen Damisa, Gumel	23/04/1959
		Rock paintings Dutsen Zane, Geji	23/04/1959
		Rock paintings Dutsen Shadawanka, Bauchi	19/03/1963
		Rock paintings, Shira	
		Gidan Madakin Bauchi	05/08/1964
			16/02/1956
3	Yobe	NIL	
4	Gombe	NIL	
5	Taraba	NIL	

Source: National commission for Museums and Monuments (2009)  
 Yobe, Gombe and Taraba states did not list any buildings.

Table VI: Listed Buildings and Monuments in North – West Zone of Nigeria.

SN	LOCATION	LISTED BUILDING	DATE OF LISTING
1	Kebbi	NIL	
	Jigawa	Rock Paintings Dutsen Habude, Birnin Kudu	15/12/1964
2	Kano	Gidan Makama.	23/04/1959
		Rock Paintings Dutsen mesa-gong, Birnin-Kudu.	06/02/1956
		Habe mosque, Bebeji, Kano	15/12/1964
		Kano City walls	-undated
3	Katsina	Old Katsina training College, katsina	-undated
		Gobirau Minaret	13/08/1957
		Tumuli Durbi Takusheyi	23/04/1959
4	Sokoto	The Ancient city of Surame	15/08/1964
5	Zamfara	NIL	

Source: National commission for Museums and Monuments (2009)

#### 4. Summary of Findings

Most of the listed buildings are of historical significance but buildings of architectural significance are conspicuously absent. In the case of Nigeria there is no known process of de-listing of listed buildings or structures. The following are some of the findings during the research work:

- I. There is lack of data bank of historical and other important buildings in Nigeria.
- II. There is no proper documentation of listed buildings and structures in Nigeria.
- III. There is no distinct classification of listed buildings or structures from the commission charged with this responsibility.

- IV. Public and Statutory bodies and the community are not always consulted during the process of listing of buildings.
- V. There is no clear procedure from the National Commission for Museums and Monuments on how measures can be taken to protect listed buildings and structures from fire.
- VI. There is inadequate maintenance of buildings, objects or structures listed.

## 5. Recommendations and Conclusion

### 5.1 Recommendations

- There is an urgent need to establish a data bank of historical and other important buildings and structures in Nigeria.
- The regulatory body should ensure that there is a proper documentation of listed building in Nigeria. The criteria for listing and delisting of building, object or structure should be properly guided as some buildings, objects and structures have been delisted from the National Commission for Museums and Monuments list without the set guidelines for delisting.
- The data did not reveal classification of the listed buildings and since there is no continuity in the documentation from the commission charged with this responsibility it may be difficult to know which of these structures and sites are still in existence. Listed buildings should be categorised in the listed document.
- Public and Statutory bodies should be part of the proceedings to formally get a building listed. Input should also be obtained from the community.
- A listed building like any other building is vulnerable to fire, particularly those offering different services and fire is a threat to both human life and architectural heritage. The National Commission for Museums and Monuments should clearly state the procedure to ensure that such vulnerability is addressed by measures to both resist the spread of fire and to protect it.
- There should be a regulation to preserve the special architectural or historic character of listed buildings and buildings within conservation areas because the cumulative effects of a large number of minor alterations can result in a serious loss of character to historic buildings.
- There should be a regular maintenance of listed buildings, objects or structures as lack of their maintenance can lead to the rapid decline of decay and structural deterioration of such a building, object or structure. The National Maintenance Policy should be formulated in Nigeria to determine the minimum standards for maintenance of these listed buildings.

### 5.2 Conclusion

It is important to regularly preserve and where possible reinstate original features of a building, object or structure that is protected due to its special historic/architectural interest. The regulatory body in Nigeria, which is the National Commission for Museum and Monuments should take the opportunity of securing and preserving these buildings, objects and structures for the benefits of the wider community and enable future generations to experience the buildings, objects and structures that have been declared as National figures as they are an important part of the history of Nigeria.

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