

Landscape: The key to an urban Design (Greater Port Harcourt in Review)

Kunenu Evans Doole, Dr. O. L. Frank

Department of Architecture, Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Rivers State,, Nigeria.

Abstract— Over the years it has been prove that a good and proper landscaping will assist in creating a comfortable and conducive environment for housing development. This paper will be looking at how proper landscaping can be a vital key to urban development. It will also be looking at how landscaping can properly shaped and make Greater Port Harcourt to meet the desires of those living and intend to move to Port Harcourt. It will based on the fundamental relationship between building design and landscape design in relation to planning, designing and the development or construction of the Greater Port Harcourt city. This will also add value and aesthetics to the city. There have been other publications and journals on the subject matter base on previous research. This paper will provide some needful information on landscape with the aim of making it an important and integral part of the building industry. It is aimed at creating and also enlighten the mind of the public and intended house owners and property developers to make landscaping a very integral part of the building. It will also look at the importance of landscaping in relation to our built environment.

Keywords: Landscape, Urban, Design, Buildings, Spaces, Adaptability, Architecture.

INTRODUCTION

The standard of the urban area and the quality of life in the city of Port Harcourt sometimes does not grow with the ever growing process of the economic development of the city. While some cities grow base on increase in population as a result of more people leaving the rural area to the urban city for greener pastures Gall .H. (2019) once said that ‘the design process begins by determining the needs and desires of the user and the conditions of the site’. This calls for the need in planning and designing the city to meet the need of those moving in the city. Therefore in planning and designing of the Greater Port Harcourt City there is every need that the urban landscape will be considered seriously to make the city habitable. For us to have a sustainable and living environment we must focus on providing a good and quality housing. According to Fitrynadia M. S, Mohd R.M. H, Izawati T & Nurbazliah Z. (2014) ‘A good quality of housing area can be highlighted as an important issue in creating a sustainable living environment’. For us to achieve this we must focus on building a functional city that will make those living there have a sense of community. We must look at building a cleaner, safer and healthy city. Our design must focus on creating an environment that will be attractive and comfortable to all. It must be

able to provide convenience, parks, gardens and other recreational activities. Also our choices of finishing materials and a proper landscape design will be very important. Our choices of finishing materials must be attractive and durable to meet the desired needs of the people. There must be a deliberate effort from both the government, individuals and real estate owners to give more importance to landscape design. Most of the buildings constructed by individuals have little or in most cases no landscape. Developers don’t take this issue seriously. In fact in most cases landscape or green areas is not even part of the designs. Bases on these there is every need for proper landscape design which will help to add value to the property and will also make the city beautiful. This paper will be focusing on the importance of landscape to our homes and environment. This paper will be looking at the importance of creating on the importance of landscape on our environment and its benefits to human. Since the introduction of landscape design in the built environment it has grown and it has also been well accepted be the developed countries hence the need for it to be encouraged in the greater Port Harcourt city and its environs. In achieving this this paper will be focusing on the conceptual understanding in other to promote the idea of land-

scaped design in our environment.

PROPER LANDSCAPE FOR THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

(Greater Port Harcourt City)

The importance of landscape to our environment cannot be overemphasized. The landscape of an area includes but not limited to vegetation, topography of the place, water bodies and special configuration which is one of the most visual needs of the occupants. Due to the interaction of humans to its environment which sometimes are contrasting base on personal preference on our type of landscape and its environment. Because it is known fact that a well-designed landscape can bring both mental and physical satisfaction to its occupant. Though the task of making decisions and implementation can be challenging at times to the way peoples understanding and their preference on their environment. According to David. B. (2009) 'Landscape design is the act of arranging or modifying the features of a yard, an urban area or the space for aesthetics or practical reasons'. He went further to say that 'for organizational purposes, it is often divided into two major parts: hardscape and softscape'.

Hardscape, according to David. B. (2009). Hardscape consists of the non-living elements of landscaping, such as a brick patio, a stone wall, or a wood arbour. While Softscape comprises the animate (living), horticultural elements of landscape design. More simply put, it refers to the plants. From the above definition we can see that both the hardscape and softscape are necessary and the complement each other to a great effect as there cannot be a proper landscape without these two combination. The perfect blend of these two will give our environment. A well designed landscape will create a quality and healthy environment. In the same vein a proper and well-designed landscape will add value to the property as it will influence the price of the property in terms of rent or sale of the property. Karl .B.L.(1963) in his definition defined landscape as 'Landscape

architecture is concerned with the arrangement of land, Water, plant forms and structures for their best use and greater enjoyment .He also went further to say that 'it deals with land planning problems such as building sites, garden outdoor-living areas playground and parks'. Therefore from the above definitions it is important to note that for us to have a conducive, healthy and sustainable environment that all these factors must be seriously considered in planning designing of the Greater Port Harcourt city.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HOUSING AND IT'S ENVIRONMENT

As important as housing is to humans it is also important to note that for us to have a better living condition that the environment must be considered. Before construction commence there must be clearing of the site which deals with cutting down of trees and wedding of grass at the same time in most if not in all cases. But what is important is that after we finished construction we must ensure to plant trees and grass around the house for us to have a perfect blend. Oleg. G. (2012) said 'that housing is one of those basic social conditions that that determined the quality of life and welfare of the people and places'. As important as it is, it will be better and conducive when we consider the environment during and after construction. And a better landscape environment will not only be beneficial to it, dwellers but it will also help in sustaining the environment. For us to have a good and desirable environment location, planning, and the landscape of the environment is key. Also our choices of finishing materials and its usage on the building is very important. Thus proper landscape design will take all these factors into consideration when planning, design and construction of the building for it not to have any negative effect on the occupants and the environment and also give the desired beauty.

ELEMENT OF LANDSCAPE

As earlier mention there are two major elements of land scape which are Hardscape and Softscape. The Hardscape are the non-living things while the Softscape are the living things. The Hardscape here can be said to be the different types of decorative or the practical structures in landscape. The hardscape are the used in the fencing, drive ways, walkways or even the benches, decorative stones etc. It a very important part of landscaping. Hardscape consist of the following; Brick patios, Wooden decks , Flagstone patios , Concrete patios, Stone retaining walls, Tile patios ,Stone walkways, Stone landscape steps, Metal fences, Wooden fences, Wooden arbors and Pergolas.



An Out Door Sitting showing hardscape.

Source: Konig Construction.

While softscape on the other hand are the animate object or living elements of landscape. Softscape include flowers, plants, grading, shrubs, flower, trees beds, etc.

Importance of Softscape on our environment. Mattea J. (2018) stated that 'If people are good at something, then it is building up excess carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Harmful CO₂ contributes to climate change, the biggest current problem the world has to deal with'. Base on this statement it is very important for us to take the issue of softscape very important as it has a lot to do for both in our environment and also to fight against climate change.

1. Trees help us fight climate change.

2. It helps in reducing the amount of heat on the earth surface.
3. It helps in the prevention of water pollution.
4. It can serve as a source of fossil fuel.
5. It also acts as shelter for wild life.
6. It helps in the control of water erosion on the earth surface.
7. It also acts as natural ventilation.
8. It helps in the purify of the air.



An Out Door Siting showing softscape
Source: Konig Construction.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Base on this, I recommend the following.

1. That landscape design should be part of the building.
2. That any building that does not have a proper landscape design should not be approved.
3. That the urban planners should always visit the site during construction to ensure buildings are constructed according to design.
4. To ensure that there is proper feedback after construction for further improvement.
5. To ensure that lawns and courtyard are always introduced in building design.

CONCLUSION

This paper has been able to explore the different ways that proper landscape design can be of advantage to human and the environment. It will be able to enlighten the minds of the public to know the value and importance and the benefits of landscaping to man and the environment. It also gives detail of definition of landscape design, its importance and also discusses the two major elements of landscape design and how they complement each other. The need for government to take the issue of landscape design seriously both in terms of design and during building construction as we begin constructions on the greater Port Harcourt city. It also give a details importance of landscape design in respect to having a sustainable environment and as we look forward to having a better, finer, healthier and cleaner greater Port Harcourt city.

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