

# CREATING ASTHETICALLY PLEASING FACADES FOR A RETREAT CENTRE, TO ENHANCE USER COMFORT

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## ABSTRACT

In this write up I explored the fast-paced nature of the African Contemporary culture acts as a catalyst for anxiety due to overstimulation. I also explored how the built environment of a retreat Centre can be designed in order to be aesthetically pleasing to the eye and bring people from a state of over-stimulation to a state of dignified calmness and composure. This paper achieved the goal of exploring the power of relaxation and helped one understand the power aesthetically pleasing architecture has in helping people lives be it thoughtful and relational. My Retreat facility was designed in such a way, that, it provided avenues by which planned meeting groups, various groups, individuals or organizations may gather together to find solution to a particular problem and problems that affects them which could be in form of lectures, seminars, debates and short courses. In This Write-up the fact that Nature over time has been overlooked and unappreciated for too long was put into consideration and I designed to proffer solution to this problem. I reintroduced the fact that Nature provides us with many benefits and is very important to our existence. Despite all these, we have failed to reciprocate any of it. My design process used initiated with a comprehensive analysis of the site and an understanding of the program required for such a project was fantastic. I made sure site-specific functions were incorporated as well into the overall programmatic layout. My design created a serene and peaceful environment where people can go for rejuvenation, relaxation, away from their normal life and daily activities. I reintroduce individuals to an experience, which states that individuals attending the retreat will be engulfed in experiencing the moment and living each breath of sensation. I explained how meditation in the lives of humans is important in contemplation, relaxation and mental hygiene and provides a platform, and serves as a vessel for self-exploration and internal growth.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

A retreat is a period set apart for prayer, meditation, and study under the direction of a leader. A retreat is "a specific time of a group or individual withdrawal to a place of solitude to improve the spiritual life of members via such methods as prayer, meditation, study, and instruction under a director," according to Webster's Third New International Dictionary. A retreat is a period and location set apart for an individual or group to reflect on, reconsider, and adopt a new perspective on their life to return to their regular lives with vigour and creativity. A retreat offers the opportunity to temporarily put life on hold, unwind, and just "be" in a warm, tranquil setting. Contemplation is the one term that sums up "A Retreat Centre" completely.

**Retreat centre:** A retreat centre is a facility that provides lodging and meeting spaces for people seeking an intentional getaway. There are many kinds of retreat spaces out there, including camp venues, spiritual sanctuaries, conference centres and residential buildings.

**Aesthetics:** Aesthetics in Architectural concept can be defined as a set of principles that is concerned with the nature and appreciation of beauty. It is also defined as a branch of Architecture that is concerned with the principles of how beautiful a building is and how it applies to the taste of an artist.

**Façades:** Façades in Architecture can be defined as the parts or areas of a building. That is visible to the eyes of an individual. It is especially an imposing or decorative one. It is also known as any part of a building facing a public way or space and it is finished accordingly.

**User Comfort:** This talks about how hospitable or pleasing a building is to encourage or enhance the stay of its users.

The content scope of this study will be restricted to the Architectural Design of a State Retreat Centre for Delta State, Nigeria that provides an array of nurturing and invigorating experiential and exploratory moments harmoniously placed throughout the natural landscape. In terms of content, the study will examine variables which include the following: Providing an optimum reverberation time, creating a serene environment, that builds and for community relationships, assisting people to find inner peace, helping people revitalize their minds by achieving balance and harmony, meeting these basic needs of providing a healthy Nurturing, recognizable environment for people and the Architectural Design of a State Retreat Centre for Delta State. The geographical scope of the study will be residents of Delta State.

The research questions are:

- I. What is the relationship between Providing an optimum reverberation time and the Architectural Design of a State Retreat Centre for Delta State?
- II. What is the relationship between Creating a serene environment, that builds and for community relationships and the Architectural Design of a State Retreat Centre for Delta State?
- III. What is the relationship between assisting people to find inner peace and the Architectural Design of a State Retreat Centre for Delta State?
- IV. What is the relationship between Helping people revitalize their minds by achieving balance and harmony and the Architectural Design of a State Retreat Centre for Delta State?
- V. What is the relationship between Meeting these basic needs of providing a healthy Nurturing, recognizable environment for people and the Architectural Design of a State Retreat Centre for Delta State/

In the course of the study, Null hypotheses will be used for the study to address the following:

- I. There is no significant relationship between Providing an optimum reverberation time
- II. and the Architectural Design of a State Retreat Centre for Delta State ( $p < 0.05$ );
- III. There is no significant relationship between Creating a serene environment, that builds and for community relationships and the Architectural Design of a State Retreat Centre for Delta State ( $p < 0.05$ );

- IV. There is no significant relationship between assisting people to find inner peace and the Architectural Design of a State Retreat Centre for Delta State ( $p < 0.05$ );
- V. There is no significant relationship between Helping people revitalize their minds by achieving balance and harmony and the Architectural Design of a State Retreat Centre for Delta State ( $p < 0.05$ ).
- VI. There is no significant relationship between Meeting these basic needs of providing a healthy Nurturing, recognizable environment for people and the Architectural Design of a State Retreat Centre for Delta State ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Housing in the form of a retreat centre remains a significant component of social policy since it is so essential to human survival (Oginwo, 2008). Without adequate housing for low-income residents in Delta State, there would be insecurity, poverty, and decreased productivity among the populace, which will have a detrimental impact on the economy. Despite the Delta State Government's attempts to address the issues, it is recognized that homelessness endures as a societal problem despite the lack of concrete numbers and anecdotal evidence disclosed (Oginwo, 2008).

This study project will aid the government and the general public in their efforts to create a welcoming and suitable retreat centre for the state's residents, strengthen the state's economy, and increase security. It should be highlighted that when it comes to receiving government resources, housing must compete with other areas of the economy. In a world of few and uncertain resources, housing must fight to remain relevant (Erguden, 2010). Since a retreat centre is sometimes seen as a societal expense, it seldom receives the same level of attention as other productive economic sectors like agriculture and oil extraction (Erguden, 2010). Therefore, via research material like the one that this study gives, The Government must continually be reminded of the significance of a retreat centre. The initiative is especially significant for those who seek peace and relaxation via leisure activities, yoga sessions, and environmental interaction.

Some obstacles are anticipated to be faced in the pursuit of a desired goal. In this research, some factors hampered the execution of this research work in the process of gathering information. Research work requires sufficient time and since this is lacking, it served as a limitation to the Some of the respondents were not willing to provide information. In Delta State, some internal public information is kept secret. There was a major constraint for data collection. Nevertheless, every effort was made to overcome the anticipated obstacles.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE WORK**

This chapter lays out the study's theoretical foundation and compiles some of the most recent research on the architectural design of retreat centres and other pertinent topics. It helps in identifying the literature gap that this research is trying to address. However, given the dearth of publications in this field of research, it is necessary to note that this review is eclectic. The following sub-headings are used to convey this overview of pertinent literature: A review of relevant empirical research, a conceptual framework, a theoretical foundation, and a summary of literature reviews.

#### **2.1.1 Housing Satisfaction Theories**

Seven (7) of the several existent models of housing satisfaction are provided below from the literature. This review incorporates the thorough discussion of housing satisfaction models by Iljeg et al (2018).

- A. Theory of Housing Satisfaction: By Galster (1987).
- B. The Positivists Housing Satisfaction Theory: By Auguste Comte (1798 -1857).
- C. Functionalist Housing Satisfaction Theory.
- D. Housing Mobility Theory: By Peter Henry Rossi 1956.

The book "Why Families Move" by Peter Henry Rossi, published in 1956, introduced the notion of home mobility (Iljeg, et al., 2018). This theory's main contribution is the inclusion of three essential concepts: aspiration, space usability, and housing stress concerning the housing environment.

- I. The idea of aspiration is that people have ideas or aspirations about the qualities they want their home and neighbourhood to have. These factors have a role in determining housing happiness. If these goals are not achieved, satisfaction will suffer. Each

person has a tolerance limit for being unhappy with their living arrangements; if that limit is reached, home mobility is inevitable. If a home is sufficient, it signifies that certain requirements related to the home are met. Residential pleasure is highly dependent on the interaction between geographical factors and dwelling unit characteristics (Gudsef, 2007).

- II. The utilization of space is another crucial consideration. The attractiveness or unattractiveness of a place in comparison to other places as assessed by a certain decision-maker is referred to as the usability of space (Felix, 2013).
- III. The theory of housing mobility includes stress as a third element. Stress is a measurement of disparity or discrepancy between the household and the environment (Felix, 2013). Following this concept, stress would be exclusively dependent on the environment around a particular housing unit and would serve as a motivating reason for movement. A push or pull element in the idea of housing mobility, such tension is hence known as housing stress. The concept of stress as a measurement of the disparity between prospective contentment in a hypothetical place of residence and current satisfaction serves as the foundation for the push factor (Alexifa, 2014). Housing stress is simply psychological tension that results from a person's contact with their surroundings. This is relevant to the research since stress is an aspect of housing delivery that must be taken into account while building an economical and pleasant house. Stress is psychological and poses a barrier to providing good housing since it has an impact on customer satisfaction. It has to do with how comfortable the residents are in their living spaces. That is one of the problems on which this research is concentrated as it looks at the difficulties in the architectural housing design of a retreat centre and offers appropriate answers.

### **2.1.2 THE THEORY OF HOUSING MODIFICATION: BY MORRIS AND WINTER (1975)**

The creators of this theory, Morris and Winter (1975), evaluated housing satisfaction based on cultural and familial norms about maintaining the housing balance in the home. This equilibrium indicates the present level of housing satisfaction, which is under certain standards. According to this theory, housing norms—which include the housing structure, the kind and calibre of housing units, the distribution of space, the costs associated with utilizing housing, and contentment in retreat centres—are the primary focus of satisfaction. This indicates that the idea is directly tied to an individual's or a family's subjective sense of their home pleasure. The so-called "housing deficit" arises if one or more of the criteria are not reached. This "deficit," according to Morris and Winter (1966), is a collection of circumstances that are deemed undesirable when compared to the standard that represents the equilibrium in the home.

The fundamental query is whether housing standards are consistent across all age, racial, cultural, and other groups. This hypothesis is lacking due to norm equality or disparity. The theory of housing adjustment is based on the idea of the family life cycle, which implies that suitable standards are not fixed and fluctuate at various periods of the family life cycle. All of the terms discussed in this research are associated with it since they were employed to describe it to facilitate comprehension. The goal of this research is to give answers to the competing problems associated with housing delivery and with running a retreat centre, not only in Delta State but also across Nigeria. This theory and the research are connected because the theory of housing adjustment is based on the idea of the family life cycle, which implies that suitable standards are not fixed and alter at various periods of the family life cycle.

The design that will be supplied by this study will address housing issues in Delta State, Nigeria, and change the whole globe, completely implementing the Theory of Housing Adjustment. The home's design will be a living one, able to contrast and grow if necessary, and it will also be geared toward resolving the issue of changing family life cycles.

## **2.2 CONCEPTUAL REVIEWS**

The earliest faiths, which tended to spend this time away from their daily and monotonous routine to have deeper capacities of focus and insight, may be identified as the origins of retreat centres. In his *Spiritual Exercises*, St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556) founded one of the earliest retreat facilities in the modern sense. Before it expanded, retreats were initially founded as religious pursuits. For various religious groups, a retreat may have a distinct meaning and a different past. Many Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, and Sufi (Islamic) societies regularly have retreated. Some people in Hinduism and Buddhism see contemplative retreats as an intimate approach to enhancing one's capacity for concentration and insight.

### **2.2.1 THE CHRISTIAN RETREAT**

Christian retreats are as ancient as the religion itself, with Jesus travelling into the desert (wilderness) to fast, pray, and establish a connection with the heavenly parent serving as a clear example.

Jesus' forty-day fast in the desert is used in the Spiritual Exercises, a work by St. Ignatius of Loyola that dates to the 1520s, as a scriptural reason for retreats. The Society of Jesus (Jesuits), whose founder, St. Ignatius of Loyola, started in the 1520s as a layman, popularized the retreat in Roman Catholicism.

Churches and retreat centres are frequent destinations for Christian retreats. Retreat centres often include food, activities, meeting spaces, overnight lodging (in a cabin or dorm), and chapel space. Later, in 1922, Pope Pius XII designated Ignatius as the patron saint of spiritual retreats.

## **2.2.2 THE ISLAMIC RETREAT CENTRE**

Retreats for meditation have a significant role in Sufism, the mystical branch of Islam. The more than 700-year-old manual for the inner trip, *Journey to the Lord of Power* (Rislat alAnwr), was written by the Sufi master Ibn Arabi. Khalwa is translated from Arabic as isolation or separation, but in the Sufi language, it has a distinct meaning. Khalwa, as used by Sufis, is the act of complete self-abandonment motivated by a yearning for Divine Presence. As the ultimate form of dhikr, the Sufi repeatedly repeats the name of God in full isolation (remembrance of God meditation). Muhiyid-Did ibn Arabi describes his journey to the Lord of Power in his book (1165/1240 A.D.) The Sufis routinely conduct Khalwa h under the direction and supervision of a Sufi leader. The forty days of the Khalwa period are assigned by the Sufis based on the forty days of fasting

Allah gave Moses (Moses) before speaking to him, as recounted in several chapters of the Qur'an. They include one from Surah al-Baqarah. Authorized Sheikhs, including Mawlana Sheikh Nazim Al-Haqqani of Lefka, Cyprus, continue to perform Khalwa today.

## **2.2.3 THE BUDDHISM RETREAT CENTRE**

Buddhism retreats may either be solitary or include group activities. Depending on the host facility's and/or the participant's knowledge and accepted customs, some retreats are conducted in silence while others may include a lot of dialogue (s). Retreats are often held in secluded or rural areas, either privately or in a retreat facility like a monastery.

Advanced Dzogchen practitioners often engage in retreats in complete darkness, which is a popular kind of retreat in the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism. Spiritual retreats provide participants with the chance to ponder, pray, or meditate. Since the Vassa, or rainy season retreat, which was instituted by the founder of Buddhism, Gotama Buddha, they are seen as vital in Buddhism. Sessions are retreats practiced in Zen Buddhism. The majority of individuals put a lot of effort into their organizations and want their labour to matter; they want to participate and work toward a goal. They need to understand that what they do daily drives their company or team in the intended direction, even in the face of competing demands and mounting pressures. When workers feel more invested in developing the organization's aims and beliefs, they are more productive and motivated. Employee motivation is increased by a well-designed retreat because it involves the workers' innovative engagement in goalsetting and decision-making. Effective retreats can result in practical strategies for resolving complicated organizational issues that have persisted for a long time.

Although there is a widespread consensus that retreats may be beneficial, people's experiences with them have been very varied. The difficulty of planning and leading a retreat is often underestimated by leaders, which is one reason why there are conflicting assessments. This essay will discuss the numerous concerns and steps that you as a leader must take while organizing and conducting a retreat. Whether you are the manager of a very sizable and complicated firm with hundreds of employees or a team leader with 12 teammates, we believe it will assist you in realizing the above-mentioned goal and guarantee that your retreat will be productive and results-driven.

## **2.3 PLANNING A RETREAT: KEY STEPS**

### **2.3.1 IDENTIFYING AND COMMUNICATING ABOUT THE RETREAT PURPOSE(S)**

The goals of a retreat might be one, two, or more. Since retreat aims to form the basis for retreat design, it is crucial to give them significant thought. As a leader, you may confer with a formal or informal leadership team or other important leaders within your team or organization as you assess the potential retreat's goals.

Retreats could serve the following purposes:

- I. starts a planning process that incorporates all the key contributors or units.

- II. create a more productive team inside a company or workplace.
- III. evaluate how well a project or organizational transformation efforts are progressing.
- IV. foster innovation and collaboration in response to issues or potential futures.
- V. Foster a sense of collective ownership for important planning decisions or organizational problem-solving initiatives.
- VI. debate matters in far more depth and with greater consideration than they can in the "managed anarchy" of the workplace setting.
- VII. provide those who travel often, telecommute, or are situated in various locations the chance to reconnect.

Whatever the retreat's goal, everyone involved must realize that it is not a means to an end. It is only one phase in a lengthy process to create or maintain a successful team or organization. For the retreat's procedures and outcomes to mesh with current tasks and the usual burden, considerable planning is required.

Additionally, as the retreat's leader, you must be extremely persistent in expressing its objectives, controlling expectations, and ensuring that any important action items are followed through. A lack of understanding of the retreat's objective and the team's or organization true goals is the most persuasive argument against retreat success. As a result, it is essential to communicate the objectives to participants and create expectations for what the retreat will achieve.

### 2.3.2 DECIDING ON A RETREAT FACILITATOR

You have the option of organizing a retreat committee, selecting a volunteer facilitator, or organizing the retreat yourself. If you want to use an outside facilitator, they need to be included in the first phases of preparation. There are various times when you might think about getting outside assistance. For instance:

- I. A high degree of involvement is difficult to obtain in big gatherings. Making judgments and finding solutions to challenges is more difficult than it may first seem. When there are 20 or more participants, when more than just employees are attending the retreat, or when it is rare for the group to come together, an outside facilitator is beneficial.
- II. A facilitator is helpful when you, as a team or organizational leader, wish to fully engage in important management or programming problems without worrying about presiding over the meeting. This is particularly true if you want to act as an advocate at different points throughout the conference.
- III. When there are rival factions inside the group and at least part of the retreat's purpose is to lessen or manage these disputes more skillfully, enlisting the assistance of an outsider is appropriate. Outside assistance encourages a sense of objectivity that might help to clarify and lessen the disagreement. Even if you may see yourself as impartial in a certain scenario, the other parties involved may not.
- IV. You could determine that getting people interested completely requires the help of a facilitator since getting others to participate is not one of your talents. You may be able to maintain it appropriately back at the workplace after the degree of engagement has risen during the retreat.
- V. Meeting facilitators may assist with agenda development, and meeting management, and function as a catalyst for igniting and monitoring progress with follow-up activities.

What qualities should you seek in a facilitator if you decide to hire one? First, a facilitator may be an external consultant, a member of your company if it is vast enough for them to have little interaction with your region, or someone from a unit having this as one of their mandated roles (some HR units have this).

Some qualities of a facilitator are:

- a. An effective facilitator should have knowledge on how to guide teams through challenging situations while maximizing involvement. A facilitator could be hampered by such information at times (who may, if not careful, get too involved in the subject of the discussion).
- b. The retreat facilitator has to have enough expertise to identify which issues are important and suitable for discussion. Additionally, the facilitator must recognize when a topic has been adequately aired and encourage its resolution.
- c. The candidate must be a superb listener who can lead a productive conversation by asking open-ended questions and encouraging a range of participants to offer their opinions.

- d. Skilled and proficient facilitators are committed to assisting the business in achieving tangible outcomes, and they see the retreat as only a component of a bigger organizational process. It may be prudent to look for other facilitators if a candidate, whether from outside or within the business, does not demonstrate this attitude during the interview.

The following stages after selecting the facilitator are to create the agenda, choose who will participate, settle on the team or organization's expectations for the retreat, and identify an appropriate location.

### **2.3.3 DEVELOPING THE AGENDA**

There are several approaches to getting opinions that may guide the creation of the agenda, including:

- I. You may decide on what you believe to be the retreat's key concerns and arrange them in a timeline-appropriate order.
- II. Key individuals or a random selection of employees may be questioned utilizing an easy-to-use computerized survey. The questions on this instrument may be open-ended (such as "what are the problems with..."), scaled (such as "rate the following problems from 1 to 5), or both. The information obtained via this approach may be used to inform or at least shape the agenda.
- III. You may call for a planning committee, or series of planning committees, that comprise a cross-section of workers. No more than 5-8 persons should be in such a group, and its mandate and timetable must be made explicit (is it to plan the retreat, advise on key issues, or react to your plans). The usage of such a group is mostly a leadership issue.
- IV. The outside facilitator, or members of the planning committee if there is none, may interview a cross-section of participants (or by some combination).

It is not required to employ all four techniques if your team or company is smaller, says, 10 to individuals. Instead, you may conduct a team poll and utilize the results to guide your decisions on the ultimate objectives and schedule. Alternatively, if a facilitator has been hired, they might interview all or the majority of the personnel and utilize the information to assist plan the retreat. The best strategy, however, is to subtly mix all four of the aforementioned agenda-development techniques if your business is bigger. These techniques may be both cost-effective and extremely beneficial input, particularly when actual resource restrictions are given. For instance, doing an online poll may provide general, helpful information. Just a representative sample probably has to be questioned before the key concerns are made obvious given the strong cross-section of participants. A planning committee simply requires a few meetings to provide input on the agenda-making process.

The greatest retreats often include a well-planned mix of various activities, balancing out small- or large-group conversations with participatory leadership or team games, simulations, or brief training sessions. To keep things interesting for all participants, a good agenda often includes a variety of different activities. If an agenda is well-designed, learning and conversations from one activity type may tremendously benefit another. A portion of the retreat may be dedicated to improving people's conflict management abilities, for instance, if the conflict was recognized as a concern during the data collection process. This might be done via a brief training session or by employing a conflict management simulation. An expert facilitator may advise on how to blend various approaches, how to divide up the time during the retreat, and how to make sure that various activities build upon one another and take the group closer to attaining the objectives throughout the agenda design process. Whatever method you as the leader decide to use to assist in the planning of the retreat, a draft set of objectives and an agenda may be completed and distributed among the team or organization around four weeks before the retreat. Who will participate in all or some of the retreats will be decided using this approach?

### **2.3.4 DECIDING WHO ATTENDS**

The agenda and goals of the retreat have a significant role in the choosing of who to invite. Decisions about participation may be made as part of the process of obtaining data and developing the agenda. Participants in retreats may range from the CEO and senior management to the whole technical staff, to everyone in the company or office, or even a team leader and a complete work team. It could make appropriate to restrict participation to the leadership team if the objective is to ensure that they agree on the course to take for the next year. It makes sense to extend an invitation to more individuals if the objective is to encourage employee input and engagement.

Choosing who should attend is often challenging. How many individuals can attend the retreat and yet make it effective given that certain departments or functions are rather large? It works best when there are eight to twenty individuals present. Organizations

and groups, however, often exceed that size. Retreats may be arranged with 40 or 50 participants if more involvement is needed, but they must be properly planned to be successful. For a successful outcome, a combination of small group activities and reports to the larger group is required. It is a good idea to hire a professional facilitator to assist with the planning or delivery stages, or both, of a retreat when the participant count exceeds 25. The choice of "who arrives" should also include "who does not come," which is a challenging issue. It might be challenging to draw the boundaries and invite just top technical leaders to a retreat after you've decided to do so. Staff members, who are referred to be "professionals" What about the helpers? There are no correct solutions in this situation, but it is important to carefully evaluate who chooses not to go, what that implies, and what message it conveys. Will inviting - or not inviting - improve or worsen existing divides within the organization if there are already conflicts between groups? Another option is to schedule periods for all workers to participate and other times for certain groups to participate depending on the pertinent concerns. In general, it is preferable to err on the side of including too many people than to overlook someone or a group who could be essential for the team's future success.

One last point: participation choices are often based on received knowledge or local recommendations. We needn't invite anybody from that division since they aren't engaged in marketing conversations and don't have anything to offer in that area, for instance, according to the argument that advised closing one office. Maybe it's true, maybe it's not. However, the manager in such a situation has to think about if that sort of vision is in line with their plans for the company.

The retreat may be used to raise awareness, define new and distinct roles for people and divisions, and encourage people to reconsider connections and interrelationships.

### **2.3.5 FINALIZING AND COMMUNICATING RETREAT EXPECTATIONS**

Two crucial things need to be taken into account when finalizing and communicating expectations for the team or organization once the agenda has been established. First and foremost, it's critical to make it apparent to everyone that concentrating on a small number of agenda items and completing them properly is preferable to concentrating on a large number of agenda items and completing them just partially or not at all. Second, it's crucial to decide on and express how you want this retreat to balance providing time for general conversations, personnel reunions (particularly if they are not co-located), and talking about specific operational difficulties. While retreat sessions that result in tangible results can have a significant impact on the organization's operations, the kind of in-depth conversations that cross lines and encourage people to reconnect can foster relationships that have a positive impact on people's ability to collaborate for months to come. This is particularly crucial as individuals work virtually increasingly often in businesses and depend on trust to determine the meaning of emails, phone calls, and Skype conversations. The need for a balance between substance (such as future goals, a change project, or leadership challenges for the team or office) and procedure must be emphasized as a result (for example, building a team, increasing participation, and having fun).

### **2.3.6 CHOOSING A SITE**

High-performing teams can often work hard and play hard. At a retreat, having fun helps to achieve crucial outcomes. The "work hard - play hard" mentality will take root if the right setting is carefully selected. Yet, selecting a good place is typically left to the last minute – almost as an afterthought. A retreat location should ideally be exactly that: an escape from the "regular" office to somewhere where individuals can unwind from daily job demands. A retreat conducted away from the office environment allows for substantially more work to be completed than one held there. Discover a conference room that is outside the workplace if financial constraints prevent you from using an out-of-town location. There are several meeting options accessible in most cities, whether they are at hotels, conference centers, or unconventional retreat facilities (local universities or churches sometimes have them). You can meet at your office if required, but you could want to utilize a conference room that you don't often use. The conference room should, if at all feasible, contain windows, cozy seats, and space for smaller groups to work. Another recommendation is to conclude the first day with a social gathering (a reception like a gathering, a coffee or tea session, or whatever). All of these arrangements provide evidence that things are not going about as normal. Why are the location and surroundings so crucial? It's important to remember that the retreat's informal components significantly increase productivity. Discussions on important topics often take place during breaks, lunch, supper, or after dinner. In a manner that the office setting discourages, the climate—more casual and participatory— encourages individuals to be honest and direct with one another. Even seemingly unimportant social time adds — for example, a person will discover that discussing something socially over lunch with another person can help prepare the way for a following in-session conversation on a difficult issue.



## 2.4 IMPLEMENTING THE RETREAT: SIX ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

Clear objectives, an agenda, and an approximate time estimate for each agenda item should have been determined throughout the planning phase by you and/or the retreat planners. (Retreats might be from a half day to three days long.) Six key components must be present for a retreat to be successful, in addition to the preliminary work mentioned above.

- I. As a leader, you must start with a well-thought-out opening presentation after the introduction and getting-started activities. You must clearly explain the retreat's purpose during this first session, including how it will advance the unit's or team's goals for the next year. You must emphasize the significance of the retreat and the fact that it is only one element of your leadership strategy for reviving and maintaining an efficient group and organization. Then, you can outline the behavior you anticipate from retreat participants (such as "full participation" or "open exploration of these ideas" or "advice to me so I can make this specific strategic decision" or anything else); it is important to emphasize that interruptions will be kept to a minimum.
- II. The retreat leader (you, the outside facilitator, or the member of the planning committee) must communicate the objectives and the schedule for the retreat after the opening presentation. This should provide some time for queries and any suggestions made by participants for the final schedule. If any data collection was done before the retreat, the findings need to be presented now. This is the ideal opportunity to explain how the problems discovered during the pre-retreat data collection influenced the final retreat objectives and schedule.
- III. After the retreat's structure and direction have been decided upon, the schedule will often contain several in-depth conversations or interactive activities centered on specific issues or challenges. These talks may be conducted nearly completely in unison if the retreat group is small (less than 10 or 12). It's crucial to blend small-group and large-group work if the group is bigger. In situations like this, small group work optimizes participation and gets better, more substantive thinking. When there are just 25 of us, some participants may sometimes inquire, "Why not simply discuss topics in a bigger group?" It is crucial to continue using the small group strategy at this time. Only the most talkative people in big groups often engage; the traditionally quieter individuals who may require time to reflect or an invitation to speak or who do not want to disrupt are typically mute, which frequently results in a significant loss in the quality and contribution of the debate. Furthermore, talks in extremely large groups can go off-topic in ways that virtually make careful consideration, attentive listening, and unambiguous agreements impossible. The retreat leader must emphasize involvement within time constraints and, if using this strategy, give specific small-group assignments for these talks to be effective. A leader and a reporter should also be chosen by the small groups or assigned.
- IV. The retreat facilitator is responsible for leading interactive exercises and facilitating conversations and report-outs. The facilitator must make it obvious to the group when a debate on a particular topic has come to an end and must check in with them from time to time to ensure that nothing is being "over-discussed." Additionally, the facilitator must ensure that no one individual is in charge of the conversation and work to provide everyone with the opportunity to engage. The leader (whether or not you are also serving as the facilitator) needs to be clear about when decisions are to be made and how you are using the group in the decision-making arena — to advise, to vote, to reach consensus, or to provide input to you, who will then make the decisions — insofar as input into decisions is an important part of the retreat.
- V. As the retreat progresses, the retreat facilitator must keep track of important agreements. Decisions are recorded to assist assess (a) if agreements are valid and (b) whether parties understand the agreements. A laptop, flip chart, or other suitable electronic devices can be used to publicly record these items. Keeping them in sight serves as a reminder of advancement. ii. The retreat facilitator must assess agreements toward the end of the retreat and, with feedback from either the group or the leader (or both), prioritize any potential follow-up actions. Since everyone returns to a "normal" workload and extra work that is not of the utmost importance frequently just do not get done, it is desirable to assist the group in limiting the number of actions to only those most important as part of this process. As a result, the group begins to believe that they have failed or that the retreat process has failed, while in reality, it may have been unrealistically unwise from the beginning.
- VI. The facilitator can assist the leader and group in allocating responsibility and setting deadlines for high-priority action items. These assignments are more likely to be completed following the retreat if they are more detailed and measurable. This list has to be examined and verified for accuracy one last time. Consider our typical workload - can we accomplish all these things and still get the workout? is a useful question to address during this last evaluation phase. Do any of these tasks need to take precedence over some of the regular work? Should we remove or temporarily shelve any of these things after more consideration?

### 2.4.1 THE LEADER'S ROLE IN THE ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN OF A RETREAT CENTRE

One last thing demands special attention: your leadership position. You must set an example for others, and any acts you take must fit with your typical leadership approach. Alternately, you might convey a tiny (or not so slight) change in your leadership style

through your behaviour at the retreat. This requires prudent thinking. You might believe that the retreat's role for you is to remain silent and listen. Yes, it is a component of it, but you also need to voice your opinions and take the initiative in making decisions. You must actively participate, voicing your thoughts without dominating and, sometimes, delaying your contribution until nearly the end of the conversation. Although it is important to stress listening, the staff will notice if your behaviour during the retreat is utterly out of character and may conclude that nothing is "genuine" about the proceedings. You find it challenging to strike a balance between sharing your opinions and inviting others to participate.

Additionally, you must refrain from attempting to persuade the group to reach "the right conclusion" or take "the appropriate" action. It is much better to announce your position up front if you are aware that there is only one correct response to a given question rather than wasting everyone's time by pretending to participate. People are willing to support a leader's goals or "holy cows," but not if they believe they are being forced to. This naturally requires you to consider carefully what is actually up for discussion and what isn't, as well as what kind of feedback is required for which topics. Ensuring Appropriate Follow-up in the Architectural

## 2.5 DESIGN OF A RETREAT CENTRE

If the retreat yields any action items, follow-up is crucial. Retreats need a lot of planning and are a significant financial investment. Expectations regarding advancement and positive organizational transformation then frequently rise. People frequently become more discouraged if this progress—or at least some of it—does not materialize than if the retreat had never taken place. Finalizing responsibility and time deadlines for each of the priority items is a crucial step in the follow-up procedure (assuming some initial agreements during the last retreat sessions). Meeting with those who offered (or were suggested) to continue with specific issues is one approach to achieve this. Always agree that it is preferable to choose fewer tasks and complete them than to choose many tasks and fall short during this meeting. Reiterating the necessity of completing the action items is part of the ongoing responsibility. One of the action items should be observed and acknowledged when it is completed. Cheerleading is a term that would be quite fitting in this situation. You can continuously search for constructive successes and highlight these successes in public settings. Regarding retreat follow-up, there is one practically inevitable conclusion: if you do not actively participate in monitoring progress and promoting work on important action items, not much progress will be made, especially in the architectural design of the retreat centre. The pressure and priorities of daily life will divert nearly everyone's attention from their goals. Consequently, the follow-up role is crucial.

### 2.5.1 A REVIEW OF THE CRITICAL STEPS

This section is supposed to be a review and check list that will aid you in managing the retreat process if you are an organizational or team leader considering engaging in any form of retreat activity.

- A. Choose the following well in advance of the retreat dates (at least two months)
  - I. Identify and share the aim of the initial retreat.
  - II. Select the retreat leader
  - III. Develop the agenda for the retreat and fine-tune its purpose, which involves gathering information to inform it (choose who will do it, what information will be obtained, and who on staff will contribute); Considering the potential application of a planning committee; examine the impact of the facts on the agenda and goals; Examine the plans for realism; it is preferable to complete fewer things more effectively than a greater number of incomplete or superficial tasks.
  - IV. Decide who will participate (this is easier if you are the team leader of a small group); if not, carefully check your assumptions here to ensure that significant groups are not unintentionally left out. Choose the location for the retreat and confirm that it is available.
  - V. Control what the entire organization expects from the retreat.
- B. Introduce the retreat with a strong opening statement that explains how the retreat and its results fit into your larger agenda.
- C. Participate in and help lead the retreat (if you are not the facilitator); set or aid in the crystallization of agreements as they emerge.
- D. Summarize follow-up strategies and review decisions, actions, and responsibilities at the conclusion. Follow up on high-priority action items; encourage others, recognize success, and exert pressure when necessary.

### **3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The intent of this curriculum section is to provide an understanding of design elements and principles relative to their use in the architectural design process. Within our built environment, there are specific design solutions that can create a reaction (emotional likes or dislikes) relative to our response to the structure. These basic principles work together, providing the tools and means through which to create the solution. No one principle may be solely responsible for the success or failure of a particular project as they all work in concert (Eduard Boullée).

Architectural design principles are not neatly identifiable as "fixed parameters". The reality is, they are flexible. It remains the responsibility of the architect to interpret the client needs through the use of the intended principles; allowing for variation and abstraction as required to suit the intended solution; Design is a plan for arranging elements in such a way as to best accomplish a particular purpose.

### **3.1 COMPONENT COURSE MATERIALS**

The structure of this curriculum section presents the various elements of architectural design individually. Noted integration between the elements is discussed where applicable however, all of these elements and principles work together to provide a successful solution. The design elements and principles reviewed provide an outline of the aspects of architectural design. The unity of these items is found in the specific theory and philosophy of the architect. There are two basics prevalent approaches to design, these being:

- I. The whole is the sum of the parts.
- II. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

The latter approach follows the Gestalt theory wherein a structure will present specific properties inherent in its composition which can neither be derived from its parts nor considered simply the sum of its parts. This section explores the specific elements and principles of design related to architecture, though the concepts within each element and principle may be applied to any act of design.

### **3.2 INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGY**

#### **3.2.1 DIRECT INSTRUCTION**

- I. Lecture series with written material hand-outs.
- II. Slide presentation showing design examples.

#### **3.2.2 INDIRECT INSTRUCTION**

- I. Lectures from visiting professionals.
- II. Audio-visual presentations on design examples.

#### **3.2.3 INDEPENDENT STUDY**

- I. Student research on design elements and principles.
- II. Student completion of design folder and illustrations.

#### **3.2.4 INTERACTIVE INSTRUCTION**

- I. Design techniques, block studies.
- II. Materials composition and external affects review.

### **3.3 STUDENT ACTIVITIES**

#### **3.3.1 ORAL**

- I. Presentation on design studies.
- II. Class discussion related to design effects and environment.

#### **3.3.2 VISUAL**

- I. Graphic and physical production of Photographic and contextual studies.

#### **3.3.3 KINESTHETIC**

- I. Production of graphic and block studies.

#### **3.3.4 WRITTEN**

- I. Report preparation/summary of design studies.

### **3.4 ASSESSMENT METHOD**

#### **3.4.1 PENCIL AND PAPER METHOD**

- I. Written testing on elements, principles and definitions.
- II. Graphic submission in design analysis.

#### **3.4.2 PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENTS**

- I. Participation in class activities.
- II. Presentation assessment relative to report and analysis studies.
- III. Participation on group and assigned activities.

#### **3.4.3 PERSONAL ASSESSMENTS**

- I. Awareness of design elements and principles relative to environment.
- II. Greater understanding of the built environment. Common Essential Learnings.

#### **3.4.4 COMMUNICATION**

- I. New terminology and definitions.
- II. Enhancement of non-verbal communication skills.

#### **3.4.5 CREATIVE AND CRITICAL THINKING**

- I. Understanding of essential design components of Understanding of analysis and assessment of design solutions.

#### **3.4.6 INDEPENDENT LEARNING**

- I. Research, graphic assignment, community studies.
- II. independent study of established design concepts and applications.

### **3.4.7 NUMERACY**

- I. Mathematical applications of design elements and relationships (Scale and proportion)
- II. Application of geometric principles.

### **3.4.8 TECHNOLOGICAL LITERACY**

- I. Understanding of composition elements, materials and design terminology (i.e.: proximity, connection, context)

### **3.4.9 PERSONAL SOCIAL VALUES AND SKILLS**

- I. Enhanced knowledge base relative to the built environment.
- II. Awareness of environment and context relative to design solutions.
- III. Understanding of cultural influences relative to architectural design.

### **3.4.10 CLASSROOM CLIMATE**

- I. Visual access for lecture and presentation.
- II. Natural lighting, display lighting.
- III. Focal point classroom setting, flexible lab setting.

### **3.4.11 PHYSICAL SETTING**

- I. Student desks / writing stations for lecture areas.
- II. Open areas for movement in lab to allow for group activity.
- III. Drawing or assembly stations in lab for graphic production.

### **3.4.12 FLEXIBLE STUDENT GROUPINGS**

- I. large area for group assignments.
- II. Research areas for student work projects.

### **3.4.13 EXTENSIONS BEYOND CLASSROOM SETTINGS**

- I. External site trips for community study.
- II. Exterior tours around building area for local environment study.

### **3.4.14 COMMUNITY EXPERIENCES**

- I. Site trips for community study.
- II. Community analysis for graphic production studies.

## **3.5 MATERIALS / RESOURCES REQUIRED**

### **3.5.1 IN-ROOM SUPPLIES**

- I. Audio-visual resources.
- II. Graphic production materials.
- III. Writing / display surfaces.
- IV. Production stations.
- V. Photography tools.

### 3.5.1 EXTERNAL SUPPLIES

- I. Access to community environments.
- II. Photography equipment.

## 4.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

By introducing architectural experience, the participants in the Retreat, people will discover thoughtful moments of texture, colour, light, material, and space designed to evoke thought, sensation, emotion, comfort, joy, connection, etc. Architectural design as a conscious act begins with a level of organization. The specific steps in the order of this organization vary on a personal level with each individual, however a general outline for the process involves:

- I. Definition of the project
- II. Analysis of the possibilities
- III. Definition of the specific problem
- IV. Examination of the alternatives
- V. Selection of characteristics
- VI. Production of the solution
- VII. Clarifications/revisions to provide a final result.

### 4.1 ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN ELEMENTS

The tools and devices used in the process of architectural design can be defined as either design elements or design principles. Design elements are those which can be defined as specific "parts" of a design solution. Design principles are those items which influence, direct or resolve the overall composition of the design element. These Architectural design elements include:

- a. Materials.
- b. Colour.
- c. Line.
- d. Shape.
- e. Mass.
- f. Space.
- g. Texture.
- h. Balance.
- i. Symmetry.
- j. Asymmetry.
- k. Colour.
- l. Hierarchy.
- m. Line.
- n. Texture.
- o. Space.
- p. Contrast.
- q. Rhythm.
- r. Proportion.
- s. Pattern.

- t. Space.
- u. Shape.
- v. Form.
- w. Symbolism.

#### **4.1.1 LINE:**

The use of a line represents the most basic of architectural design elements. Lines define the shape, form and volume of a design solution. They also create a sense of the rhythm and flow within a solution.

#### **4.1.2 COLOUR:**

Colour is an aspect of architectural design which provides a wide array of potential affects. Colour may be used strategically to provide emphasis to the character of a building or component, it may be used to accentuate form and materials or it may be used to separate and define distinct divisions of an overall scheme. Colour may also be used to convey the intended spirit of a design.

#### **4.1.3 SHAPE:**

Shape as a design element relative to architectural principles refers to the two-dimensional representation of form. Shape is the outline, silhouette or basic form of structure that which is the simplest to perceive in built form. Shape evokes a responsive emotion in the viewer, providing the "first" effect of the building solution. The forms and types of shape will provide varied responses, utilized by the architect to create an emotion in accordance with the intended design solution.

#### **4.1.4 PROPORTION:**

The proportion of an architectural design solution is the three-dimensional aspect of the shapes. This element represents the geometric look, or block of the shape. Every architectural design is composed of a block, outline or sculptural form of some type. This basic form is categorized as Mass. The massing of a building has a major impact on the overall appearance and subsequent response to a design solution.

#### **4.1.5 TEXTURE:**

Texture is a design element that relates to the surface appearance of an item. Texture is perceived architecturally in two ways: visual and tactile. Texture in materials relates to the manner by which we perceive the feeling of an item's surface: smooth, rough, soft, etc.

#### **4.1.6 SPACE:**

Architectural design involves the practice of enclosing undefined space to serve a defined use or need. Architecture as an entity contributes to the richness, effectiveness and variety experience of human life within the spaces created. There is sensation in every inch of it (Living Architecture), and an accommodation to every architectural necessity with a determined variation in arrangement, which is exactly like the related properties and provision in the structure of organic form. The concept of undefined space is sufficiently vast to encumber the mind in limitless thought. Space stretching on outside our borders and world into infinity defies the imagination. It may be said that space exists in the absence of form. We do not begin to grasp the concept of space until it is enclosed by form.

#### **4.1.7 BALANCE:**

The principle of balance is a key design principle relative to the architectural design process. Balance occurs when opposing forces or visual weights appear to be equal and harmonious. The need for order seeks a balance in life and nature so that harmony with the environment can be achieved. Balance is also one of the design principles that is both the easiest and most difficult to resolve.

#### **4.1.8 SYMMETRY:**

Symmetry is achieved when the solution presents equal or mirror image appearances across a central vertical (visual) axis. Twin Tower Symmetry This type of balance is perceived most often in nature as well as the human form. The perception relative to the use of symmetrical balance is that the solution is stable, grounded and solid. Solutions of this type are those most often found in history as public, authoritative structures; therefore, we ascribe the values of dignified, authority and formality to this means of expression. Symmetrical balance is the one that is easiest to achieve, though it must be carefully considered relative to the architectural design requirement. It is rarely the situation where a design program will provide for equal distribution of the same functions to provide two halves of a design solution.

#### **4.1.9 ASYMMETRY:**

Asymmetry occurs when distinct parts that have equal perceptual weight is arranged across a vertical (visual) axis. This type of balance presents a solution perceived as dynamic in form, illustrating active characteristics. This type of balance being deemed as "informal" based on the formality ascribed to symmetrical balance through historical reference. Asymmetrical balance is most common within design solutions, generally a result of the requirements of the architectural program. This type of balance presents the greatest challenge to the architect since effort must be extended to ensure there is equitable weight of opposing sides.

#### **4.1.10 EMPHASIS:**

Emphasis is an architectural design principle that provides a focus within the design solution. The art of emphasis is achieved by providing a point of climax relative to a specific feature or element. This point of achievement may be specific to the height, colour, texture or sound. The purpose of emphasis is to provide a sense of the underlying theme or context of the design solution. The focal point is often the item, space or element that the remainder of the design keys off or centres around. Any element that contrasts deliberately with the overall composition will automatically be sensed through our perception as a focal point, a distinct element requiring our attention.

#### **4.1.11 FORM:**

The use of various forms, their shape, size, scale and surface characteristics will provide a perception of weight, being either heavy or light related to the remainder of the composition. This perception is derived by the participant based on their impression of the sense of effort required to install the specific form.

#### **4.1.12 SYMBOLISM:**

The use of symbolism is a crucial component in establishing the means and methods through which architectural design is read and understood. Symbolism establishes a form of communication by incorporating complex and abstract ideals into a built form using design elements and principles. Typically, symbolism in architecture provides a simplified image or the pure essence of a concept, derived from a complex system or philosophy.

#### **4.1.13 RHYTHM:**

The use of rhythm within architectural design implies a melodic response incorporated into the built solution. Architecture and musical expression have often been defined in similar terms, rhythm being a key component of both artistic streams. Figure 44: Exterior Columns, SaskPower Building (J. Pettick Architect) Rhythm in architecture relates to a regular occurrence (rhythmic) of similar and like effects. Rhythm may be perceived through the sense of movement (line and shape), sequence and patterns incorporated into the design solution.

#### **4.1.14 PATTERN:**

When a texture, symbol or image is repetitive or decorative, it is referred to as a pattern. Pattern, like texture, is a surface item used to provide variety and unity through visual interest. Items in cadence (regular rhythm) create a sense of rhythm; rhythm repeated creates a pattern. Almost all architectural designs contain some form of pattern, though in some examples the actual pattern may



be hard to define. Pattern may be found in regular or irregular sequence using elements of line, colour, texture, form, shape and light.

#### 4.1.15 HIERARCHY:

Hierarchy is defined as when an element is given more importance in comparison with the other element. Hierarchy in architecture is usually given in building design and in construction to create a meaning to the elements, to emphasize.



Figure 4.1: Ogbudu Mountain Resort and Retreat Centre Exterior View

Source: coutrips.com (2022)



Figure 4.2 Om Shanti Retreat Center

Source: mappedin.com (2022)

## 4.2 THE ARCHITECTURAL SITE

### 4.2.1 SITE SELECTION CRITERIA:

- I. The facility should be located away from everyday life.
- II. It should be situated close to nature such as islands, hilly areas, valley areas etc.
- III. The location should be serene, allowing visitors to effortlessly connect with their inner selves. The entrance should be such that it reflects the whole idea of a retreat.
- IV. The site should have easy access connecting major areas of the site.
- V. The site should be sizeable enough to accommodate the proposed facility

## 6.0 CONCLUSION

The primary aim is to provide a place for the revitalization of the body, mind, and spirit. A place where one could relax and connect with his/ her inner self. This is achieved by bringing nature into play, in a quiet and serene environment. It also aims at providing a place for studies, learning, and relaxing while on retreat. Such activities include; research, therapy, workshops, recreation, etc. The Centre intends to make people feel like a home away from home while pointing to one particular thing, which is open and green areas to achieve the desired comfort within the Centre and the meditation garden. This design is about nature, light, experience, individualism, and benevolence to ones-self, one another, and the environment in which one resides. Understanding of the relationships between people and space, and how they perceive it. With a deep-rooted connection to nature, the retreat invites guests to spend time extracting lessons through experiential exploration of the grounds and beyond. In the design of a retreat Centre, the following are very necessary; The layout of the buildings should take an east-west orientation in order for the building to take advantage of the sunrise and south west trade wind. The building form should reduce exposure to solar radiation. Some existing trees on the site, as an important landscape element should be used as buffer and shading devices. Drainages should take advantage of the presence of the water body flowing through the site. Wall finishes materials that don't retain moisture should be used. Cool and bright colors should be used to enhance/ facilitate healing.

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