

RESTORATION OF THE HINDERER HOUSE, KUDETI, IBADAN

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Introduction

In discussing the Hinderer House, it would be presumptuous to overlook the owners of the house: David and Anna Hinderer. The very essence of who they were – and what their mission was in building this particular house – constitutes the premise on which the restoration project was undertaken. Back in the mid-Nineteenth Century when the original building project was undertaken, in its articulation, on the one hand, it was typical; however, on the other it was not. Having been built by members of the colonial ruling authority, it was typical of their style of architecture at the time within West Africa. In introducing the two-storey variant (and the predisposing techniques) to Oke Kudeti (and Ibadan, as a whole), Hinderer House was glaringly atypical.

Historical Background

David and Anna Hinderer

In Richard Hone's compilation, *17 Years in the Yoruba Country: Memorials of Anna Hinderer*, David is cited as a "CMS Missionary in Western Africa" (Hone, 1872). As at the time of this literary work, Anna had already passed on. That such a publication is available today says a lot about perseverance (as David had been reluctant to have his wife's labours in the Vineyard published, believing in a more rewarding divine acknowledgment).

Anna Hinderer (nee Martin) was born in Norfolk in 1827. She lost her mother when she was just five years old. This led to her father acceding to his own father's request that she relocate to Lowestoft to live with him (and Anna's aunt); this move eventually led to her staying with Revd. & Mrs. Cunningham at the Vicarage in Lowestoft. In the environment of Church (and its related activities) she learnt an appreciation for Christian liturgy, personal prayer and worship in music, which was to last her a lifetime. That early, Anna is quoted as saying she had a strong desire to become a missionary, and to have a firm belief that such a calling would eventually be hers (Hone, 1872, 5). Her joy was virtually boundless when, at age 12+, she was allowed to teach Children's Sunday School (*op cit*; 6)! Anna is said to have credited the years she spent with the Cunninghams with

being preparatory years for her “work and calling” (*op cit*; 12). On October 14, 1852, she married Revd. David Hinderer.

Revd. David Hinderer was from Schorndorf, in Wurttemberg, Germany. Thereafter, he attended the Basel Seminary in Switzerland. In 1846, he attended the Church Missionary College in Islington, receiving Anglican ordination as a deacon in 1847, and a priest in 1848. The following year, he joined the Yoruba mission, becoming quite active in Yorubaland. So, long before meeting Anna, he had been a Missionary with the Church Missionary Society (CMS). However, since the CMS Mission base was in England, he returned there, from time to time. It was on one such visit that he and Anna resolved to get married – and immediately move out to Ibadan, on a missionary assignment. (Before the actual ceremony, Anna had ecstatically declared to a friend that she was going to “be married to Mr. Hinderer, and we are going to Ibadan”; *op cit*; 13).

David and Anna Hinderer set out for Nigeria on December 6, 1852 – arriving in Abeokuta (the then base of the CMS) on January 29, 1853 (after various stops in the Gambia, at Sierra Leone, Ghana, and in Lagos). David’s missionary outreach in Nigeria, since 1849, had been based in Abeokuta – so he had already established contacts and a core of assistants in mission work there, specifically in Ake. However, prior to taking his wife out to Africa, he had been active in mission work to Ibadan, since 1851 (where he was reputed to have been the first White Man to set foot on the soil). Expectedly, Anna was the new-comer to the various scenarios; however, her fundamental conviction of fulfilling destiny and her inherent zeal, ensured her continued buoyancy and an undaunted reaction to the new (often unpleasant) experiences. The Hinderers eventually left for Ibadan on April 25, 1853.

The Mission House

In order to make the final arrangements with local chiefs for the beginning of the Ibadan mission, David left Anna behind in Abeokuta, and travelled on March 9. In addition to his passion for mission work, he also claimed that it was necessary to go ahead to ensure that his wife’s first home in their married life would be comfortable. The period between then and April 25 (and even though he returned to Abeokuta several times during the period), marked a significant milestone in the preparations for the Hinderers’ missionary work (and general stay) in Ibadan.

The Hinderers’ first home in Ibadan was a traditional building of earth, with three wings. Their own apartment constituted one wing, and was a room 9m by 1.8m (i.e. 30ft by 6ft); one of the other wings comprised two rooms (taken up by two fellow expatriate mission-workers), with the third two-room wing made up of a kitchen and storage space. However, despite being far from the kind of accommodation they were used to in England – and actually having no doors or windows – Anna was so content with it that she remarked

that she wished they did not have to resort to “the trouble of building” (another house); *op cit*; 56. Predictably, too, the house was roofed with thatch – a situation that promoted the incidence of insect pests and other vermin (such as spiders and snakes). This apartment in the earth building continued to be their residence until the end of their first year in Ibadan.

By the end of the first week in June 1853, a large shed (covered with palm fronds) had been erected as a temporary Church building. On November 19, 1853, the foundation of what later came to be known as the Hinderer House was laid. Local artisans (under the supervision and active participation of David Hinderer himself), were involved in the construction. In anticipation of the completed building, Anna had this to say: “The first floor (level) will be about six or seven feet high, which will be used for stores, and we shall mount up, and have three good rooms, and smaller rooms made in the piazza. I can hardly fancy I am to have such comfort, yet it is with a loose hand one holds it” (*op cit*; 87). Even though Anna had had to return to Abeokuta several weeks before (on health grounds), on May 13, 1854, she was able to go back to Ibadan to re-join her husband – and to the house he had completed for them, while she was away. In her words, “Our new house, after all the toil in building it, promises to possess all the comfort we could expect or desire in this country; it is water-tight! has a good-sized sitting and bed-room, white-washed walls, and a good iron roof; comfortable piazzas, and all very airy, and as cool as anything can be in Africa, which was my principal desire.” (*Op cit*; 99-100). The Mission House and the Church were located at the top of Kudeti hill – *Oke Kudeti*. Revd. David Hinderer died in 1890, having been preceded by Anna, twenty years before, on June 6, 1870.

Diocese of Cathedral Church of St. David

Today, the Hinderer House is under the jurisdiction of the Ibadan South Diocese of the Anglican Communion and, specifically, within the landed property of the Cathedral Church of St. David, at Oke Kudeti. In its immediate environment, it is flanked by two Primary Schools (St. David’s 1 and 2); within less than a hundred metres of its location, is the Cathedral building. In its capacity as the overseeing authority, the Diocese was the initiator and local approving body for the Hinderer House restoration project.

The Mandate

The erstwhile personal residence/ Mission House of the Hinderers, by the time St. David’s Church was up and running, early in the 1900s, had become an integral part of the Church complex. However, progressively, its primary purpose (as a dwelling) had ceased to be in evidence even before the Church attained the status of a Cathedral. It had become an ancillary facility for administrative activities of St. David’s. As at the time of the restoration intervention, the building had been ceded out to the Bible Society of Nigeria, BSN, as a secretariat for their activities in the Ibadan South area.

The Church authorities, recognising the historical symbolism of the Hinderer House as the locus of pioneering missionary work in Ibadan, realised the unacceptability of allowing it to continue to dilapidate, unabated. Additionally, in the architectural genre, the distinction attaching to it as the first two-storey building in the city was something the Diocese took pride in. As such, it became expedient for the authorities to seek assistance in arresting the decadence, and to restore the building to its former glory.

The Team

Despite the great desirability (and urgency) of the needed intervention, the Cathedral Church of St. David could not afford the financial implications of the venture. Overtures were made to individuals who had both interest and experience in heritage architecture conservation, and who could attract the needed financial assistance to implement it. This eventually translated into an architectural conservation Team being put together, and given the mandate to restore the Hinderer House. It comprised Mr. Oluseyi Olagoke (Project Initiator, and Contractor, Mustard Heritage & Construction); Dr. Adebimpe Aderounmu (Main Applicant, and Project Coordinator, Development Advocacy & Values Renaissance Initiative, DAVRI); and Arc. (Prof.) Cordelia Osasona (Technical Consultant, Obafemi Awolowo University).



Plate 1: BSN Rep (Niyi Oyetunde) & the Team (front row, l-r): Cordelia Osasona, 'Bimpe Aderounmu & 'Seyi Olagoke. Initial site inspection (June 17, 2022).

In specific terms (and based on the assurance of sourcing funds), the Team was to intervene to bring back the lost glory of Hinderer House. It was to repair all that was damaged (in terms of structure and material), such that continued, unchecked decadence was stopped, and the building put in better condition to serve its present functions.

The Hinderer House: Before

General Overview

Even from Anna's "unprofessional" description, Hinderer House had been a worthy sight to behold in its heyday. On two levels, ample space was deployed to form an overall configuration of ten (10) rooms. On the ground floor, there were seven (7) rooms: the first, serving as an entrance lobby; another, substantially partitioned into two smaller areas, and a third, timber- partitioned off to create the stairwell.

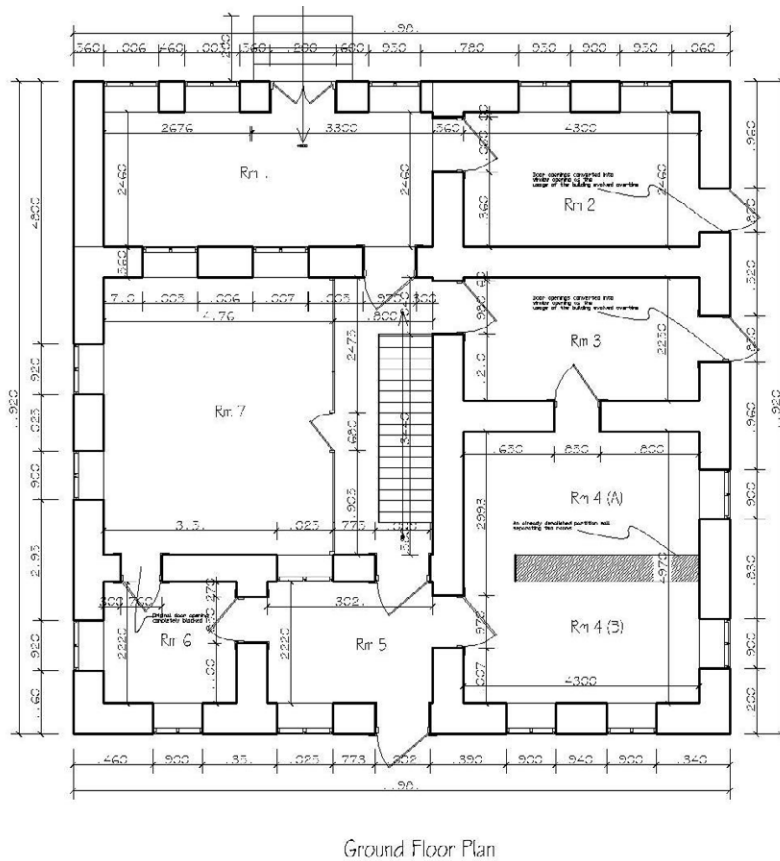


Fig. 1: Hinderer House – ground floor plan.

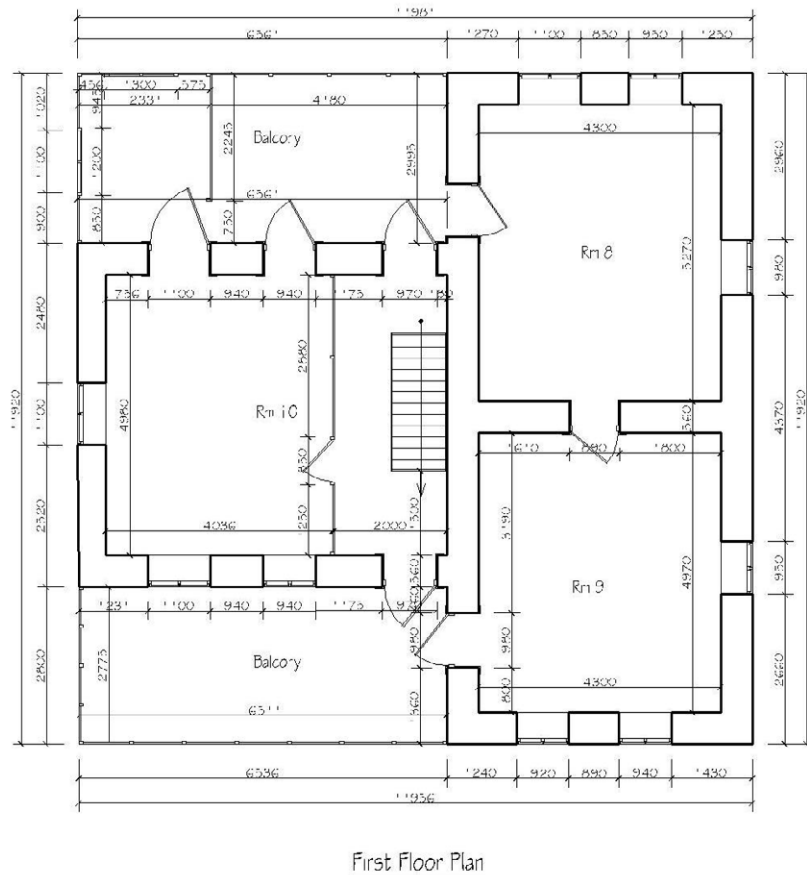


Fig. 2: Hinderer House – first floor plan.

On the upper floor, there were three (3) large rooms, the largest being similarly partitioned to continue the stairwell. At the front and at the back, there was a substantially deep veranda, making up the rest of the floor area. As with all British Colonial buildings of the time, the stairs were totally of timber. More interestingly, during the Hinderers' occupation of the building, a wooden ladder was the actual means of both ascent and descent. On retiring upstairs for the night, the ladder was retracted, and put against a wall on the first floor – only to be lowered, the following morning, for descent.

Material and Structural Composition

Unlike early British Colonial building practices (which favoured terracotta, stone, or a hybrid, including timber) the walls of the Hinderer House were of monolithic cob construction for structural walling and foundation works i.e. all walls were loadbearing.

Compacted laterite had been used for the building's foundation and the pronounced plinth on which it rested. Similarly, all internal walls were of earth – except for the timber-panelling, adjacent to the staircase. All wall surfaces (and plinth) were plastered over with a sand-cement mix. A particular corner of the building had been done in dressed stone, and emphasised with pointing (imitating blockwork) on the wall-plaster.

At the ground floor level, flooring was achieved by compaction of the earth used, and plastering over with cement. However, on the upper floor (even out on the verandas) timber-boarding on closely-spaced (450 mm/ 1.5 ft centres) timber joists, was the flooring solution. Roofing was done using timber trusses and other elements, clad on the outside with corrugated zinc sheets. In each case where it was employed, the timber was well-seasoned, and so, durable. Windows were timber-shutter, casement type, and routinely hooded with zinc sheets over a timber projecting structure.

Overall Assessment of Building Condition

As at the time of taking possession of the Hinderer House site, the building was in a highly derelict condition. Obvious (and of great concern) was the extent of the soil erosion that had taken place in the immediate environment – and which had started to threaten the continued existence of the building. In many parts of the building, the plinth on which the whole structure rested was greatly undermined. (See the pictures below). Of similar structural concern were the deep cracks that were observed in some masonry walls – particularly external ones.



Plate 2 (a & b): Tree roots in the neighbourhood (2022).

Generally, woodwork too was in bad condition; this ranged from doors and windows (and their hoods), through floor-boarding, to wall-panelling. Apart from the internal flooring and partitioning in timber, there was a lot of timberwork on the two verandas

(ranging from timber- post structural support, through balustrading and floor-boarding, to flank-panelling).



Plate 3 (a & b): Hinderer House – different wings, showing eroded building plinth & dilapidated windows.



Plate 4: Building corner done in stone, accentuated by pointing in cement-plaster. Notice the eroded plinth, as well.



Plate 5: Timber-flooring from ground floor.

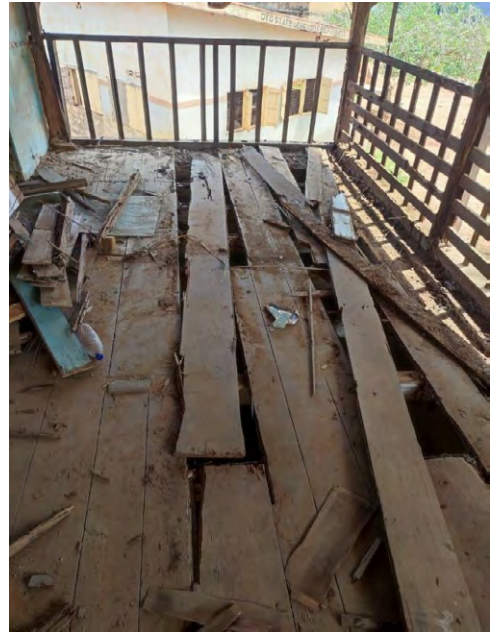


Plate 6: First floor veranda timber-flooring.

Restoration Intervention

Even though the mandate was clearly a “restitution” (i.e. restoration) one, nonetheless, several issues had to be carefully considered – in the spirit of best-practices in heritage architectural conservation.

Architectural Conservation

This is the general term covering orientations (and procedures) geared at preserving heritage buildings from further wear-and-tear, in order to extend their potential to be passed on to generations yet unborn. It covers routine maintenance, restitution or restoration (i.e. putting back what has been lost, when maintenance proves ineffective) and renewal (adaptive re-use).

Preservation clearly speaks of a setting (or orientation) that, *ab initio*, values a particular property, and goes all out to seek to keep it as close to its original condition as possible. However, for various reasons (ranging from lack of the financial means to do so, to a lack of will-power on the part of those who inherited the property), this may not be forthcoming. In a bid to salvage such property, either of the other two options is resorted to.

Restitution/ restoration seeks to make up the deficit that has overtaken the building during its years of inadequate maintenance or outright neglect. This approach is frequently resorted to when the owners are merely interested in putting the building up for public display i.e. when the aim is just to showcase how it used to be, in the days of its former glory. This is sometimes the orientation chosen for purely touristic reasons.

Renewal or adaptive re-use, on its part, attempts to gain the best of two worlds: while being concerned with preserving the building for the sake of its intrinsic value, it also seeks to make it contemporarily relevant i.e. over and above whatever value might have been added to the building by restoring its lost glory, the building is adapted to be able to function to meet the needs of its owners (and other users) in real time.

Fundamental in all these considerations – and underpinning architectural conservation – is the very character of the building itself. A building is worth going the extra-mile to revive it, if it satisfies any one (or more) of the following (Harvey, 1972):

- i. Historical significance;
- ii. Typological/ stylistic significance;
- iii. Exceptional craftsmanship.

Historical significance plays out when a building is identified with a significant incident in the history of a people or place (e.g. Fort Elmina in Ghana, identified with incarceration of human cargo, during the obnoxious Slave Trade). With respect to stylistic or typological significance, if a building is the first in its genre where it is located (or if it marks the peak of a style, or the interface of two consecutive ones), it is deemed as typologically noteworthy. In this regard, the first two-storey building in Nigeria (in Badagry, and built in 1852), readily comes to mind; similarly, so does St. Bartholomew's Anglican Church, Zaria, the first Church built to reflect the indigenous Hausa style of vaulting. With respect to the last criterion, a building may be singled out for conservation if unusual, painstaking craftsmanship has been invested in its articulation. In the spirit of the intricate mural sculpting and painting associated with its facade, the Emir's Palace in Kano (or Zaria) may be indicated on such grounds.

Given this general background, the Hinderer House is clearly indicated for conservation, on several grounds. It is the first two-storey building in the whole of Ibadan. It was also home (and Mission base) to two renowned Missionaries, not only to Ibadan, but to the whole of Yorubaland. David and Anna Hinderer left clear (and indelible) footprints in the sands of Missionary outreach in the Southwest, not just in terms of establishing the Anglican Communion as one of the biggest Christian denominations till date, but also in terms of educational outreach to children – particularly the girl-child.

Preliminary Considerations and Challenges

The Team undertook the conservation intervention based on sponsorship from the Gerda Henkel Stiftung Foundation, Germany. As expected, the grant was a fixed sum, with the timeline equally well-established before the onset of the project. Every activity (siteworks and report-writing) was to be accomplished within three (3) months – July to September, 2022.

As previously outlined, there were two options before the Team, in terms of the most appropriate approach to adopt: restitution or renewal. However, from preliminary surveys, it was obvious that the building was not actively in use by the St. David's Cathedral. Rather, only the Bible Society of Nigeria had recourse to a part of the ground floor, using it as its secretariat. It was also observed that a destitute had been given permission to use one of the rooms on the upper floor. With this background (and given limited available funds), it was decided that what the occasion called for was mere restitution to the building's as-built status. (As at the time of actually taking possession of the site, the only thing that was indicated as having undergone a change was the conversion of two of the doors that had previously opened out from the left-hand flank of the building, on the ground floor, into windows. So, apart from restoring these doors, repair works were the main operation to be engaged in on site).

The period July to September coincided with the peak of the Rainy Season. Ordinarily, the setback with respect to masonry-work would have been anticipated and taken in stride. However, with respect to the extensive timber-work that needed to be done, the heavy rains posed a major challenge that was not anticipated: access to timber forests (to source the needed wood) was restricted. This greatly delayed availability of the timber to be used for truss- (and other structural timber-) replacement; also, timber for flooring, panelling and window-repairs. In consequence, the project went on till November – overshooting by two months. Even at that, some needed timber could still not be obtained, necessitating the use of synthetic (PVC) substitutes.

Implementation Strategy

With time being of the utmost essence, a two-pronged approach was adopted as the strategy for the intervention: works would go on simultaneously, with respect to the building exterior, as well as its interior. This informed mobilization to site to begin major external masonry repair works, as well as works in timber (which were mostly inside the building).

Masonry-work

The major focus in this regard was the plinth – the base of the building in touch with the ground. As earlier mentioned, this had suffered severe damage, over the years, and needed a drastic, long-term solution. It was decided to consolidate all foundation works around the building by creating another plinth, this time of 225mm (9in) sandcrete blocks and concrete, and to further reinforce the immediate building surroundings by a retaining wall, composed of two juxtaposed sandcrete blocks, filled with concrete. The pictures below indicate the process.



Plate 7 (a-d): External works – foundation consolidation: plinth/ retaining wall.



Other masonry repair-work undertaken includes the consolidation of wall-cracks; making up of defective plasterwork (on wall surfaces, particularly at the base), and pitted floor-screeding.



Plate 8 (a-c): Plaster-replacement around doorways and on walls, generally.



Timber-work

Timber-work that suffered the most damage, understandably, was with respect to floor-boarding in exposed areas (like the two verandas); the internal timber-panelled wall was in remarkably good condition. Other areas that could not be overlooked were with respect to missing (or defective) members of the overall roof structure, and also side-panelling and balustrading that enclosed the verandas.



Plate 9 (a-b): Removal of defective timber posts & railings.



Plate 10: Replacement of defective timber posts and railings.

The Hinderer House: After

On November 24, the Team (together with a representative of the Cathedral) met on site to appraise progress made so far, and chart a path for the speedy completion of yet-outstanding works. Satisfaction on pace (and quality) of work was generally expressed; so was confidence that the project would be delivered at the end of the month, and to the agreed scope and quality of intervention.



Plate 11: Hinderer House restoration, nearing completion. Olagoke, Aderounmu, Osasona & Venerable Ogunrinde in the foreground (November 24, 2022).

The following pictures capture the transformation that occurred with respect to the various aspects of the restoration intervention on the Hinderer House.



Plate 12: Veranda roof-extension ceiling repairs.



Plate 13 (a-c): Interior ceilings, after repairs. Note the use of PVC slats in b & c.



Plate 14 (a & b): Views of new-look verandas.



Plate 15 (a & b): Rear/ right flank views of Hinderer House – before & after.



Plate 16 (a & b): Front/ right flank views of Hinderer House – before & after.

Justification for the Intervention

The restoration of the Hinderer House has previously been justified on the bases of its historical and typological significance within the context of Ibadan in particular, and Yorubaland, in general. However, perhaps true justice would not have been done to the project, if more light is not shed on the socio-spiritual impact that the Hinderers (particularly Anna) actually made within their social environment, during their sojourn.



Plate 17 (a & b): Hinderer House; left flank/ approach façade. Note the restoration of two windows on the ground floor to doors.



Plate 18 (a & b): Approach façade – before & after.

During the period they spent both in Abeokuta and Ibadan, while David had concentrated on evangelism and discipling of converts, Anna busied herself with spiritual outreaches to children, as well as their education. Because she was single-minded and passionate about this, she related with them at home – in-house. Among the notable children mentored by her was Daniel Olubi (who later became the pioneer Nigerian Pastor in charge of the Kudeti Parish in 1871). He grew up in the Hinderer household together with Susannah Daley (who had been handed over to the Hinderers while in Abeokuta). They later married

each other, eventually also becoming progenitors of the Ransome-Kuti family. The testimony of those mentored by the Hinderers was that they were very loving, and made friends easily. On Anna's part, she testified of how she had more or less become a surrogate mother to some of them (e.g. (Akielle, who referred to her as his mother; Hone, 1872, 71-72); she also referred to all those she similarly mentored as "my babies" (*op cit*; 326).

To commemorate her passion for the education of the girl-child in particular, the first girls' Secondary School in Ibadan (Kudeti Girls' School), was located at Kudeti, the Hinderers' ministry base. This school was re-located to Molete and merged with the Church Missionary Society school (CMS Girls' School) that had been previously re-located there from Lagos. The merger resulted in the formation of St. Anne's School, Molete – in its very name, an indirect tribute to Anna Hinderer. To date, the School is credited with being the oldest girls' Secondary School in Nigeria. It also has a reputation for being one of the most notable for excellent-quality education, and for producing trail-blazing career women. Among such "Old Girls" of St. Anne's, are the current Director-General of the World Trade Organisation, WTO, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala. Others include Mrs. Anike Agbaje-Williams (Africa's first female TV presenter); Prof. Bolanle Awe (Nigeria's first female Professor of History); Maj-Gen. (retd.) Aderonke Kale (the first female Major-General of the Nigerian Army), and Hon. Justice Olufunmilola Adekeye (Nigeria's first female Justice of the Supreme Court). As such (though somewhat tenuous in nature), the connection of David and Anna Hinderer with girl-child education in Southwest Nigeria cannot but also confer special prominence on the building where this interest was nurtured.

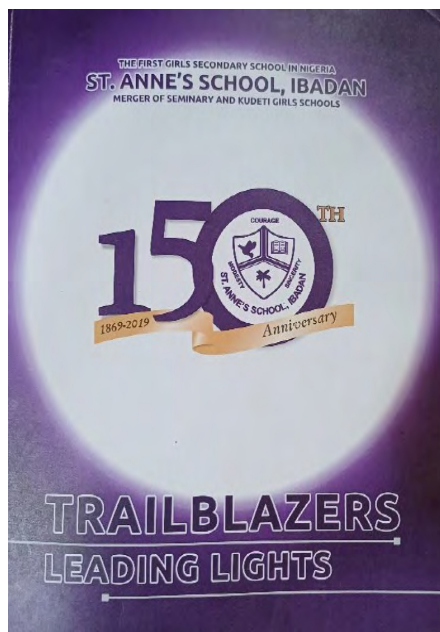


Plate 19: Cover of the brochure produced to mark the 150th Anniversary of St. Anne's, School, Molete, Ibadan (2019).

Conclusion

Restoration of the Hinderer House did not come cheap. From the standpoint of “returns on investment”, to some, such expenditure is tantamount to a waste of resources. However, looking beyond purely mercenary considerations, the exercise has been a most worthwhile one

– at least, from the point of view of the various stakeholders: the sponsors (the Gerda Henkel Stiftung Foundation, Germany), the Ibadan South Diocese of the Anglican Communion, and the professionals who undertook the intervention.

In most parts of the Global North (particularly in the West), the value of old buildings has long been established as a given. From reasons as mundane as their sheer over-structuring (where they were built for longevity, in the first place) – qualifying them still to be safe and useful in offsetting the housing deficit (Harvey, 1972) – to the equally non-negotiable posit of their potential to contribute to revenue from tourism, this value has been entrenched. Sadly, in many countries in the Global South, issues rated more topical (like those touching on existential guarantees) so occupy most governments that hardly is heritage-architecture tourism remotely indicated for consideration as a critical issue.

The Hinderer House is just one of hundreds (perhaps thousands?) of heritage structures in Nigeria which, if salvaged from their present headlong flight into annihilation, stand to confer multi-faceted advantages on their immediate localities and the nation at large. These benefits range from physical-environment upgrade, through a boosting of the nation’s tourism industry, to economic empowerment (in terms of jobs to be generated for tour guides, porters, security personnel, refreshment vendors, etc, to service the revamped tourism industry).

To those genuinely interested in upholding (and propagating) the nation’s material culture, the Hinderer House restoration project should serve as a wakeup call: an igniting of faith to believe that, where there is a will, there will *always* be a way, and that a generation owes it to posterity to pass on all that is worthy.

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