



Gleno Street: A mixed-use landmark in material honesty

This six-level mixed-use building in Accra, Ghana, combines a public-facing creative workplace with compact urban housing above. The ground floor accommodates a creative office and café, while the upper levels house a mix of two- and three-bedroom residential units. Shared amenities and utilities are consolidated at roof level.

The building is conceived as a direct expression of its construction. A reinforced concrete frame is paired with double brick walls that contribute to the structural strategy. Locally made bricks (to be laid by specially trained Ghanaian masons) are left unfinished internally and externally, celebrating the texture and craft of the material. Brickwork is also used to form vaulted ceilings at the ground floor, giving the public spaces a distinct spatial character.

Designed for Ghana's tropical climate, the architecture prioritises shade, ventilation, and durability. Deep verandahs and overhangs reduce solar gain, while louvred openings and cross-ventilation support passive cooling. The emphasis is on exposed, local, rather than imported materials with roof-level solar infrastructure reinforcing the project's low-maintenance and climate-responsive approach.

On a modest urban site, parking is accommodated in a half-basement to free the ground plane for greenery and permeable cobblestone surfaces. This landscape strategy improves drainage, supports a cooler microclimate, and creates a shared outdoor community space. The street boundary remains visually open, allowing the ground floor to read as public and welcoming rather than sealed off.

Studio Contra will manage the project's construction and procurement, working in close collaboration with our partners at Brick and Lime Group in Ghana. The development will also operate as a hands-on training programme for local master bricklayers, strengthening specialist brickwork skills and building capacity to support future projects in the region.

Studio Contra is an architectural, urban and interior design practice based in Lagos, Nigeria.

Committed to the delivery of innovative and thoughtful architecture, we work within West Africa, as well as in collaboration with practices in other parts of the world, bringing a contemporary African interpretation to challenging briefs and new contexts.

We believe that for a project to have a lasting impact, three elements must be respected: concept, culture and craft. All three link to human-centred design and long-term value creation in the

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