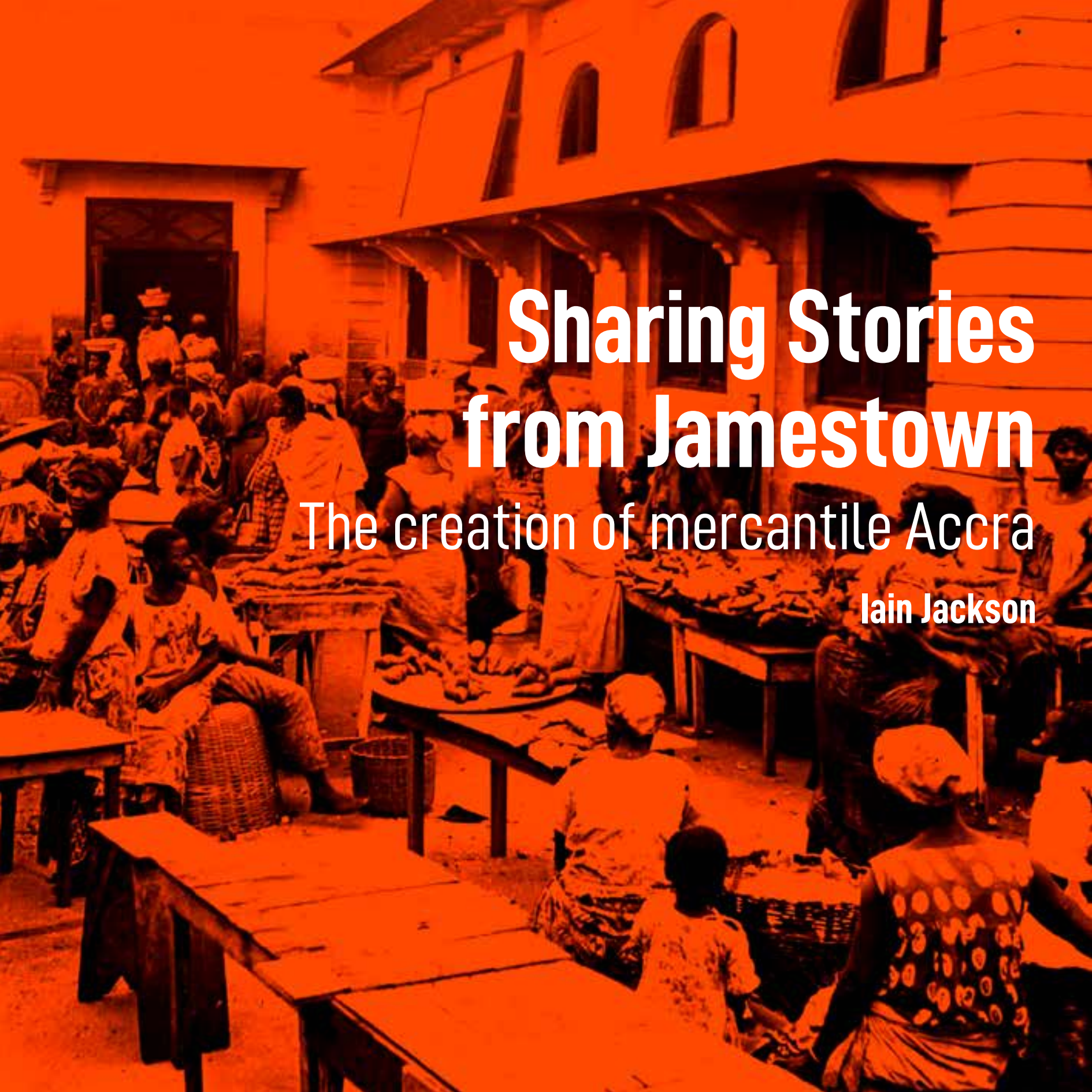

Sharing Stories from Jamestown

The creation of mercantile Accra

Iain Jackson

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Introduction

There is a certain persistence in Accra's urban development, and this slow, gradual expansion radiating from the harbour, has ensured that a residue of this rich and contested past continues to endure through the built environment. This exhibition attempts to examine this history, materialisation, and politics through the architecture and planning of the city, using a varied set of source material dating from the mid-19th Century to the mid-20th Century. Focusing almost exclusively on British colonial papers, maps, mercantile records, medical reports, and associated ephemera, the work tells a particular, and occasionally problematic story about Accra's growth into a major regional conurbation in West Africa, and the capital city of Ghana. The source material is, by its very nature, presenting a very particular view point, most of which was captured at a moment when the British Empire was at its peak in terms of land mass and socio-political influence. Whilst revealing the ambition and varied exploits of the imperial mission, this material also displays a vulnerability and lack of certainty – a timid and somewhat hesitant approach to development, that until the 20th Century barely ventured beyond the coast. The work reveals an interesting cleft between the Government officials and the mercantile community, one that was partially bridged by characters such as Joseph Chamberlain and Gordon Guggissberg, and their ambitions to develop key infrastructure; railways, docklands, 'tropical medicine' and schools. Whilst these grand projects clearly transformed the geography of the terrain, tropical medicine proved to have an equally significant bearing. It prompted the desire for European officials to live in 'segregated' housing from the African population, a move that was questioned and resented not only by the African community, but also various Governors and European merchants. This approach was to have major ramifications for the development of the town, resulting in vast swathes of prime land being set aside as cordon sanitaire. For the traders and merchants, this tactic was largely ignored, and many continued to live in the vibrant "native" trading quarters, such as James Town, developing large estates, warehouses, and eventually high end department stores.

These decisions continue to manifest themselves in today's Accra, and we can observe the more intimate density of James Town compared to the more salubrious planning at the Ridge.
Whilst the Government agenda and approach has, in part, been previously examined, this work has tried to devote more attention to the mercantile efforts, examining the 'every day' and 'functional' premises of the traders, as well as their attempts to steer policy. Jim Richards' examination of the 'functional tradition' from the 1950s is particularly of note here, and whilst many of Accra's mercantile and harbour warehouses are not always sophisticated or celebrated structures, together they form a large and important group of buildings from a particular period, offering a unique collection from this turbulent period. Furthermore, they are of a particular type, encompassing luxury villa, shop front, warehouse, agriculture yard, and factory – often all within one compound. These business vortexes were complex organisations handling imports and exports as well as managing agencies and subsidiary companies. They also traded in 'entertainment' and were often the sites for open-air film projections in compounds decorated with a more flamboyant architecture.

Having uncovered old photographs, maps, drawings and postcards from various archives, we have set out to trace these buildings in today's Accra. Many survive in various states of [dis]repair and there is a certain joy and seductive quality to the 'before and after' images. But hopefully these graphical traces can be used in a more critical manner to help us understand how the city developed, and the reasons that prompted decisions to be made. The built fabric acts as a repository, and like all documents or texts, it continues to change in terms of physical remnants and tangible qualities. Accra presents some extreme cases with only the delicate fragments of a shell remaining, for others it is too late and the entire site has been flattened (such as Sea View Hotel). Equally, buildings also stimulate or provoke different meanings, receptions and interpretations over time.

The obelisk in Salaga Market, for example, no longer delivers the same message it did after the 1900 Anglo-Asanti conflict, and the monument has now itself become entombed within a market shelter.
Even more recent attempts at nation-building through the monumental parade grounds of Independent Ghana cannot muster the same nationalist pride they did a mere 60 years ago. Meaning and significance are fluid terms that are constantly being challenged and re-created, and whilst James Town was largely dominated by the large mercantile traders, it should not be thought of merely as a 'colonial construct', or somehow not Ghanaian through this association. It presents a far more complex, uncertain, and contrary set of phenomena to untangle. Through a careful examination of the built environment we can, perhaps, begin to understand this place and also to cherish and appropriately re-use, reimagine, and thus re-appropriate the structures that remain with us today.

At a recent lecture given in Kumasi, I was accused of wanting to 'preserve everything' and to create a static relic of a museumified city. This could not be further from the truth. Our cities are alive, and they need to grow, change and shift to suit new requirements, land value, population levels, and so on. But what we must do in this frantic drive for modernisation and improvement, is to carefully assess what we have around us, and not to discount the value that resides in an old building from an artefact point of view, but also, and perhaps more importantly because of the the intangible embodied stories, memories, crafts, and events they also shelter.
A careful and sensitive use of heritage need not restrict development – indeed, it can enhance and increase the value of new projects, as well as ensuring that the embodied energy of the built fabric is not lost. The array of markets, warehouses, villas and compounds is a gift for creative industries, events, recitals, as well as small scale production, manufacturing and enterprise, and I hope this exhibition can provoke and stimulate further interest, research and ambition in this historic core of the city.

Atswere niji Otswere le mra ajeo ni ohereo.

Acknowledgements

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I'd also like to thank Irene Appeaning Addo; Soumyen Bandyopadhyay; Barclays Group Archives and James Darby; The Basel Mission Archive; The British Museum; Stuart Carroll and the Technical Staff at Liverpool University School of the Arts; Andrew Crompton; George Intsiful; KNUST library staff and head librarian Samuel K. Nikoi; Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine; Kuukuwa Manful; Liz McGuiness; Nat Nuno-Amarteifio; The UK National Archives; London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and Claire Frankland; Rexford Assasie Oppong; Peter Pimblett; Bright Botwe and staff at Public Records And Archives Department; Augustus Richardson; Tuuli Saarela; Lukasz Stanek; John Traynor; Belinda Tyrrell; Ola Uduku; Unilever Archives and Ruth Loughrey, Debbie Thompson, Helen Unsworth; University of Liverpool Special Collections and Archives and Library, especially Jo Klett and Sian Wilks; Henry Wellington; Martin Winchester, Steve Winterton;
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Iain Jackson.

Archives Consulted

Barclays Group Archives
The British Library
The British Museum
KNUST Library
Liverpool Medical Institute
Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
The National Archives, UK
Oxford Bodleian Library
Public Records And Archives Department (PRAAD, Accra)
School of Oriental and African Studies
Unilever Archives, Port Sunlight
University of Liverpool Special Collections and Archives
Wirral Archives
Yale Center for British Art

Jamestown Lighthouse with the Seaview Hotel on the right. c James Barnor

Early works in the 19th Century

Control of British trade on the coast of Ghana (or Gold Coast as it was known during the colonial period prior to 1957), oscillated throughout the 19th century between Companies of Merchants and the Crown. Following concerns that post-abolition slaving continued the Government retook control from the African Company of Merchants in 1821, and despite there being over 1500 miles between the British interests they were treated and governed as a singular administrative unit. It was a risky venture and following Governor MacCarthy's defeat by the Asanti in 1823 the British Government began a slow withdrawal. The evacuation decision was informed by Inquiry reports commissioned into British settlements along the Coast, including a commentary by a Dr M. Sweeny who wholeheartedly condemned the location, but suggested that if residence was unavoidable, it should not exceed 12 months before a period of recuperation in more 'healthy climates' was enjoyed, a principle that was retained by the British administration well into the 20th century. [1]
Regardless of the British Government's opinion of the Coast, merchants were prepared to take their chances and requested permission to continue trading. They were largely left to manage affairs and maintain the British forts aided by a small Government stipend.[2]
Sanctimonious speeches and pious proclamations that 'internal slavery' was still rampant brought the Government bounding back again in 1837, with control still directed at arms length from Sierra Leone.
By 1850 Gold Coast (combined with Lagos) received its own dedicated Governor and was expected to be a self-funding entity without subsidy from Britain. Some 'Public Works' were commissioned but were limited to basic repairs and orders for new furniture. Attempts were made in 1852 to impose a poll-tax in the British controlled territories with the chiefs under 'protection' to collect 1 shilling per head. The chiefs received payment for collecting the monies and conducting a census, with the remainder,

'devoted to the public good; in the education of the people; in the general improvement and extension of the judicial system; in affording greater facilities of internal communication; increased medical aid; and in other such measures of improvement and utility as the state of the social progress might render necessary' [3]

Expressed in these terms it seems rather progressive; but of course there was no representation in exchange for these dues, and the chiefs were put in difficult positions, having to act as tax collectors, beneficiaries, and having to petition the British 'to offer suggestions' as to how the funds might be dispensed. Following a very poor collection rate (or at least one lower than the British had hoped to collect) and the 'Christianborg Rebellion' in 1854, a militia known as the Gold Coast Corps was formed. They were also trained as 'carpenters, sawyers, masons, bricklayers, smiths, painters, miners'[4] and built a bridge across the Anomabo Road procuring all of the stone through their own quarrying and fashioning nearly all of their own tools.[5] The British acknowledged that 'taxing the native for their benefit has not been successful' and looked to raise additional revenue from imports instead, levying 3 per cent on all goods entering the Colony.[6] The merchants viewed this constant meddling as irritating at best, and found that the cost of Government to far out way its benefits. The mail service terminus moved from Plymouth to Liverpool in 1858 prompting an array of West African trading companies to be established there and in near-by Manchester. Despite their dislike for Government intervention, the Manchester and Liverpool merchants strongly petitioned for the purchase of the Danish forts for £10,000,[7] under a somewhat dubious claim it would help stem slaving, whilst many suspected the genuine ambition was commercial advancement and the desire to 'embark upon a system of territorial aggrandisement'.[8]
It would also stop the Danish undercutting the British customs tax.
Exploiting local tribal divisions and offering (and sometimes imposing) 'protection' the British were able to negotiate free trade, impose rules, and to levy taxes, or 'tributes' as they were known. Whilst unable to dominate the most powerful tribes or kingdoms (such as the powerful and highly organised Asanti) they were able to exploit internal tensions and trading disputes with their weaker adversaries, such as the Fanti. The British were able to justify their support of the Fantis by claiming that they were being repressed by Asanti and subject to slaving, human sacrifice and pillaging at their hands.

Rather like Sati in India, considerable attention was given to these practices, and they enabled the British to take a moral high-ground whilst gradually taking control of the trading, disputes and land-use within the protected territories, as well as dictating terms with the hostile groups.
Whilst the largest conurbation at that time was Cape Coast, the settlements around Osu, James Town and Ussher Town, collectively known as Accra, were gaining increasing prominence and trading significance. The Colonial Surgeon's report from 1859 included a somewhat brusque critique of the settlement:

'The sanitary condition of the town is deplorable, notwithstanding that some good has of late been effected by the municipality...Foul stenches everywhere assail the nose and corrupt the air, dunghills being attached to the huts...I have said before that the houses are so closely connected that a free current of air between them is much impeded and these narrow spaces and the public highways are further polluted by the surface drainage, which at present is allowed to escape freely from the houses upon the streets, and still further contributes to the unhealthiness of the town'.[9]

This was the first medical critique of the Colony with direct reference to the built fabric of the town, connecting perceptions of dirt, housing and planning with that of health and well-being. Variations on these comments would be rehearsed for the next century, with each generational cohort of engineer, sanitation officer, and planner reciting similar perennial platitudes. For most, it was a precarious existence, and the chances of surviving, let alone profiting from ventures on the coast were slim.
The majority of the early European traders and their buildings clung to the coast line, and by 1868 the only habitable British forts were at Cape Coast Castle and Fort William, Anomabo.
Attempts to explore the 'interior' were hampered by the lack of roads and expense (and difficulty) in transporting goods and people by hand.[10]
Further early reports commented on the disorganised nature of the markets and plea for the restoration of the dilapidated forts, ironically, to aid the 'moral regeneration of this part of Africa'.[11]

1. Christianborg Castle, George Cansdale's collection on the Gold Coast 1938-1948, Royal Commonwealth Society, University of Cambridge, Y30448K.152

Inroads were slowly cut into the hinterland and by 1869 a substantial 45 mile long road was under construction, stretching north from Accra to the hills of Akropong, supervised not by the British Governor and merchants, but the Basel Mission.[12] The missionaries were to play a major role in the development of the Colony, working alongside the British in the somewhat blurred boundaries of the Gold Cost, Volta Region and Togoland.

"Are we to stay on that Coast or abandon it?" [13]

Progress was frequently hampered by the multiple 'skirmishes' and no less than seven wars fought between the British and Asanti throughout the 19th century. Following one such major and expensive war, the British Parliament again pondered whether it was all worth the effort. They debated vacating the area altogether, it not being a particularly profitable venture at that time and condemned as a source of 'disease, misery, and expense'.[14] The Dutch traders had a long presence on the Coast too, often residing in very close proximity to the British. After attempting to amalgamate 'spheres of influence' by exchanging their forts and territories with the British, the Dutch also ceded their efforts, selling out in 1872. With these departures, the British remained as the only Europeans present on the Gulf of Guinea coast stretching from Axim to Accra, and import duty leapt to 4 per cent.

Citing a moral obligation, and seduced by their own gallantry, the British decided to remain and the Gold Coast Colony was formally created (and still included Lagos until 1886). Whilst known as a 'Colony' it was in the strictest sense a protectorate of Britain as the area was never 'captured', and 'nor have they [the indigenous population] ever ceded their aboriginal rights in the country by treaty'.[15] There was also no intention of permanent settlement or 'colonisation'. However, the expansion of territory under British control was encouraged by the trading firms who petitioned and lobbied at every opportunity.

They believed that trade was being hindered at the coast and desired greater access to the mineral reserves (particularly the gold that the Asantis had guarded so carefully) and opportunity for agricultural development.[16]

A period of consolidation followed including a review of the 'capital', or headquarters of British operations. Parliament again deliberated whether to withdraw from the territory, eventually claiming that it was not just a commercial balance-sheet exercise but a moral concern. They claimed a sense of duty to those 'under protection', and a concern that the Asanti would expand their domination of the area. Cape Coast had long served as the main town and centre of operations, but its suitability was under question. There were fourteen stone houses built there by 1827 and it continued to attract major investment in building and development.[17]

Despite this promise, Cape Coast contained varied and conflicting family connections and allegiances. Furthermore, there was insufficient space for expansion as brackish marshes engulfed the settlement. Moving the British Governor and entourage to a new location would enable a sense of new beginnings and would also destabilise the existing patterns of power.[18]

Elmina was briefly considered, but Accra was the largest trading town, and needed to be carefully controlled, especially as it generated 33 per cent of the colonies entire customs revenue. The ground at Accra quickly drained, its sea breeze dulled the heat, and it was closer to the more salubrious Akwan hills ('which would be to Accra what Simla is to Calcutta') and whilst its shoreline received a heavy surf, it was closer to Lagos than Elmina.[19] It was here that the officer appointed to review the relocation, Captain M. T. Sale [20] proposed the new capital and Aburi as a 'sanatorium site', informed by the experiences of the Basel Mission and a 'copious' pure water supply.[21] The Chief of Aburi donated the land. [22]

"In these hills missionaries have lived for a long time, and their children have been born and have grown up there. European flowers and vegetables grow, and the conditions of European life and health exist there"[23]

The move to Accra prompted the construction of new bungalows and conversion of the former Danish fortress, "Christianborg Castle" into the Governor's residence and office. The Governor anticipated, 'no difficulty in obtaining free of cost a sufficient amount of unoccupied land between Christianborg Castle and Accra (i.e. Usher Town and James Town), upon which to erect the whole of the new public buildings' [24] and the Colonial Secretary urged the Governor to purchase any land rights necessary prior to the public announcement of the relocation, to minimise speculation and price inflation.[25] It was seen as vacant territory to be simply acquired and used as they desired.

Sale noted that most of the larger houses are 'ill-adapted' and, 'of expensive construction, provided with large enclosed court-yards and numerous storehouses, yet it is rare to find a dwelling-house where the rooms are really suited to the climate'[26]. The typical large house had a substantial walled compound but with no means for rain water to drain. Sale noted that, 'After the heavy tornadoes, this water forms an extensive puddle, green and putrid, which remains exhaling malaria for several days before it dries up'.[27]

Instead he proposed a far simpler approach to construction, claiming that,

'all that is wanted is that the houses should be well raised, freely exposed to the breeze in all directions, provided with plenty of doors and windows, and, above all, with ample verandah space. The house should be only one room in depth, and should face due south, because in this position the verandah is best shaded from the sun, and at the same time all the rooms are freely exposed to the south-west and south-south-west sea-breeze blowing in a direction oblique to the front of the house, this being better than having the front directly facing the sea-breeze, because it then at times creates unpleasanly-strong draughts through the rooms. The climate on the coast is so tempered by the rains and cool sea and land breezes that the heat is seldom great, and the spacious rooms, massive walls, and thick roofs, so necessary in Indian house-building, are quite unnecessary, and even out of place, on the Gold Coast'[28]

2 View of James Town, 1880-1905,
©Trustees of the British Museum. Ref: Af,A48.141

Sale's sketch set out the principles for a climate responsive architecture honed for the coast, and one that would shape how Accra was to be developed by the colonial administration. Sale was also in favour of using local materials and techniques, suggesting that masonry columns should provide the support for the structure with the main house framed out in Odoom or Iroko timber as they both resisted termite attack. His final task after overseeing Christianborg castle refurbishment was to undertake a basic survey of Accra including proposals for an improved landing to the east of James Fort, channelling all imports and personnel through a single point of entry and thereby directing the commercial growth of the town to that area.[29]

The move to Accra prompted an increase in 'Public Works' with the main focus on concrete channel surface drainage, installation of public latrines, laying of roads, creating culverts, and installing small bridges.

Development was slow not least due to sickness, extended annual leave (one engineer only worked for eight days in one year due to a combination of leave and extended period of illness). Works were frequently abandoned due to lack of adequate foremen supervision, delayed arrival of materials and machines, difficulty in procuring labour (at the right price) or due to external circumstances, such as a gold rush or military campaign suddenly diverting labour and interest elsewhere.[30]

3 Elevated view of Otoo Street, 1880,
©Trustees of the British Museum , Af,A48.132

Footnotes

1 Letter from Dr. Sweeny (Surgeon to the Forces) to Major Rowan (Commissioner of West African Inquiry), 20th September 1826, 'Correspondence respecting the British Settlements on the Gold Coast and Occupation of Assinee by French in 1843', House of Commons Papers, no.398, vol.46, p3.

2 See Letter from R. M. Hay to Thomas Lack, 27 June 1827, 'Correspondence respecting the British Settlements on the Gold Coast, House of Commons Papers and Occupation of Assinee by French in 1843', House of Commons Papers, no.398, vol.46, 398, p5.

3 Sir George Barrow, 'Summary of Major Ord's Reports on the British Settlements on the Gold Coast, 17 May 1856, The National Archives, Kew, CO 879/1/25, 37.

4 Colonial Office, 'Report on the Annual Blue Book of the Gold Coast for the Year 1852. Colonial Administrative Reports for the Gold Coast 1846-1861', ed. by Colonial Office (London, 1853), p.203.

5 Colonial Office, 'Report on the Annual Blue Book of the Gold Coast for the Year 1852. Colonial Administrative Reports for the Gold Coast 1846-1861', ed. by Colonial Office (London, 1853), p.203.

6 Sir George Barrow, 'Summary of Major Ord's Reports on the British Settlements on the Gold Coast, 17 May 1856, The National Archives, Kew, CO 879/1/25.

7 See http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1850/jul/19/supply-western-coast-of-africa-and#S3V0113P0_18500719_HOC_73

8 See speeches made by Sir William Hut, MP, http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1850/jul/19/supply-western-coast-of-africa-and#S3V0113P0_18500719_HOC_73

9 Colonial Office, 'Report on the Annual Blue Book of the Gold Coast for the Year 1858. Colonial Administrative Reports for the Gold Coast 1846-1861', ed. by Colonial Office (London, 1859), p24-25.

10 Some British visitors did venture into the interior, such as T. Edward Bodwich, 'Mission from Cape Coast Castle to Ashantee, with a statistical account of that kingdom, and geographical notices of other parts of the interior of Africa' (London, J. Murray 1819).

11 Colonial Office, 'Colonial Administrative Reports for the Gold Coast 1846-1861', ed. by Colonial Office (London, 1847), p. 147.

12 Colonial Office, 'Report on the Annual Blue Book of the Gold Coast for the Year 1868. Colonial Administrative Reports for the Gold Coast 1867-1871', ed. by Colonial Offce (London, 1869), p20.

13 The Earl of Carnarvon, 12 May 1874, http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1874/may/12/observations#S3V0219P0_18740512_HOL_3

14 Mr Muntz, Hansards 4th My 1874, 'West African Settlements', http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1874/may/04/resolution#S3V0218P0_18740504_HOC_62

15 W. Walton Claridge, 'A history of the Gold Coast and Ashanti from the earliest times to the commencement of the twentieth century' vol 2, (London, J. Murray, 1915) p172.

16 Ibid, p302. The Manchester Chamber of Commerce was particularly eager to increase the cotton trade with the coast.

17 See A. D. C. Hyland, 'The Architectural History of Cape Coast', Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana, vol. 16, no. 1, Jan, 1995, p163-184.

18 It was a technique the British would deploy elsewhere, not least in India with the creation of a new capital at Delhi in 1911.

19 The Earl of Carnarvon, 12 May 1874, http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1874/may/12/observations#S3V0219P0_18740512_HOL_3

20 Sale had previously serviced in Bhutan in the 1864-65 campaign, where he commanded a company of Bengal Sappers and Miners, see https://digital.nls.uk/british-military-lists/archive/97343435

21 'Report by Captain M. T. Sale on Public Works', 9 July 1875, The National Archives, CO 879/8/4, p2.

22 Governor Strahan to the Earl of Carnarvon, 10 June 1875, Papers relating to Her Majesty's Possessions in West Africa, Cmd. 1343., p51.

23 The Earl of Carnarvon, 12 May 1874, http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1874/may/12/observations#S3V0219P0_18740512_HOL_3

24 Governor Strahan to the Earl of Carnarvon, June 10 1875, Papers relating to Her Majesty's Possessions in West Africa, Cmd. 1343, p51.

25 The Earl of Carnarvon to Governor Strahan, April 9 1875, Papers relating to Her Majesty's Possessions in West Africa, Cmd. 1343, p72.

26 'Report by Captain M. T. Sale on Public Works', 9 July 1875, The National Archives, CO 879/8/4, p3.

27 Ibid, p3.

28 Ibid, p3-4.

29 Captain Sale, 1875, Proposed Landing Stage at Accra, The National Archives, MPG 1/1112/1-4.

30 See W. Walton Claridge, 'A history of the Gold Coast and Ashanti from the earliest times to the commencement of the twentieth century' vol 2, (London, J. Murray, 1915) for a detailed account.

4. Map of Landing Place at Accra, by Captain Sale, UK National Archives, 1875, MPG 1/1112/1-4

Trading at Accra and settlements in the hills

The ability to trade with minimal interruption was of paramount importance and the earliest developments focused upon the movement of people and goods. Prior to the relocation to Accra developments were already progressing with new wharfs and landing places, and a market place and lighthouse were constructed close to James Fort.[31] In many ways, these three types embody the entire enterprise of the time; shipping goods, disembarkation, and a place for exchange. The formalisation of these events not only saved lives and merchandise from the perils of the sea, it increased the rate of transactions, encouraged and stimulated further trade, and in light of the failed poll tax, enabled substantial customs duty and market stall licence fees to be collected. Trade cannot take place without there being some infrastructural shifts that transform the environment and the modes in which it is controlled, used and experienced.[32]
The expenditure on 'Public Works' activities served as a litmus for the prosperity of the rest of the Colony and revealed, in part, the priorities of the Colonial Government, as well as the emerging markets, trends and desires of the Colony.
Through these works it is possible to track technological developments (through the creation of wireless and telegraph stations, installation of electricity), attitudes to sanitation and hygiene (through drainage and water supply), health provision (hospitals for Europeans and Africans), and the creation of a network of seemingly benign infrastructure (such as roads, rail and docklands).
Territories were mapped to a very fine grain, and there was a shift away from merely exchanging goods, to one of extraction and cultivation. Samples were taken from the ground and tested to establish mining potential and above ground there were also attempts to further raw material production through kola, cocoa, palm, rubber, and various fruits.
This was accelerated when a botanical station was created at Aburi in 1885, becoming a full station five years later and the Governor contemplated moving his residence there.[33]

5 Basel Mission Chapel at Aburi, 1880-1905, ©Trustees of the British Museum., Ref, Af,A48.136Museum , Af,A48.132

The missionaries had already founded a substantial settlement with a chapel and mission house, and were a reliable workforce available for hire.[34]

The mission-house strongly resembles the sanatorium, both taking the form of a simple elongated bungalow with gallery access.[35] The sanatorium was built within a cultivated and lush garden helping fever-stricken Europeans to convalesce, and until quite recently the building was used as a guest-house.[36]
Prior to the construction of this station, sick Europeans would be 'invalided' to Grand Canary, if they made it that far. Much more than pleasure gardens the cataloguing, recording, and classifying formed a scientific laboratory and 'branch' of the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew, with its mission to increase fruit yields and discover medicinal or commercial uses. They also prepared and distributed strains of seeds[37] in an attempt to advance output and reduce crop disease, and new processing techniques were trialled prior to commercial production.[38] Increased farming yields would help the balance of trade with Britain and potentially open up new markets.
It was one of the first quasi-Government institutions to be established, having been first mooted as early as 1842.[39] The Wesleyan missionaries had established an industrial garden at Beulah, 8 miles inland from Cape Coast and had grown over 1,000 coffee trees amongst other 'valuable plants', and reports at the time bemoaned that traders should not just barter at the coast but should 'cultivate the land in the interior', as the more adventurous missionaries had done.[40] Eventually a pulping shed with tanks for processing coffee was set up at Aburi [41] and rubber tree seeds were sent from Kew following their initial 'acquisition' from Brazil in the 1870s. The network of Botanical gardens throughout the empire created an education and training system aiming 'to stud the whole of Africa with men who are capable of teaching natives the rudiments of tropical agriculture'.[42]
The 'Curator's Bungalow' was finally completed in 1898 the curator having moved to Aburi from Kew some nine years earlier.[43] It still stands today, a finely built house (probably constructed by the Basel Mission), designed with a raised stoop, brick base and hardwood first floor projecting over the base to create a shaded verandah.[44]

The relocation of the administration brought development and investment to Accra, and coupled with further commercial interests on the western coast and the growth of Sekondi, the former capital Cape Coast began its steady decline.

Footnotes

31 Colonial Office, 'Report on the Annual Blue Book of the Gold Coast for the Year 1869. Colonial Administrative Reports for the Gold Coast 1867-1871', ed. by Colonial Office (London, 1870), p17. See also National Archives, MPG 1/1112/1-4, 1875.
32 Brian Larkin, 'The politics and poetics of infrastructure', Annual Review Anthropology, 2013, no.42, pp327-343, p.328.
33 See Philip D. Curtin, 'Medical Knowledge and Urban Planning in Tropical Africa', The American Historical Review, Vol. 90, no. 3, 1985, pp594-613.
34 Established in 1875 for European Officials, see report from Captain M. T. Sale, 9th July 1875, Gold Coast Public Works Report, The National Archives, CO 879/8/4.
35 It was refurbished in 1917 but doesn't seem to have been modified substantially since. See Report on the Public Works Department for the Year 1917, Annual Departmental Reports relating to the Gold Coast and Togoland, 1843-1957, p.16.
36 An historical photograph of the garden can be viewed at: http://www.bmarchives.org/items/show/72229
37 HMSO, 'Colonial Reports: Gold Coast 1902 No.397', (London, HMSO, 1903), p.23.
38 For example, rubber manipulating and smoking sheds were erected in Tarkwa and Aburi in 1912.
39 W. Walton Claridge, 'A history of the Gold Coast and Ashanti from the earliest times to the commencement of the twentieth century' vol 2, (London, J. Murray, 1915), p.352.
40 Sir George Barrow, 'Summary of Major Ord's Reports on the British Settlements on the Gold Coast, 17 May 1856, The National Archives, Kew, CO 879/1/25, p.41.
41 Government of the Gold Coast, Annual Report for 1895, 'Reports on the Public Works Department 1895-1925-26', no 167/96, p.39.
42 Charles Bruce, 'The Broad Stones of Empire: Problems of Crown Colony Administration' (London, Macmillan and Co, 1910), p.116.
43 Government of the Gold Coast, Annual Report for 1897, 'Reports on the Public Works Department 1895-1925-26', no 167/96.
44 It was one of several other agricultural-botanical stations – others opened at Christianborg in 1901, Tarkwa, 1902, Kumasi in 1906 and Tamale in 1909, see L. H. Gann, Peter Duignan (eds), 'Colonialism in Africa, 1870-1960', (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1969).

6 The Sanitorium at Aburi, 2018, Author

7 The Curator's House at Aburi, 2018, Author

Communication and Exchange

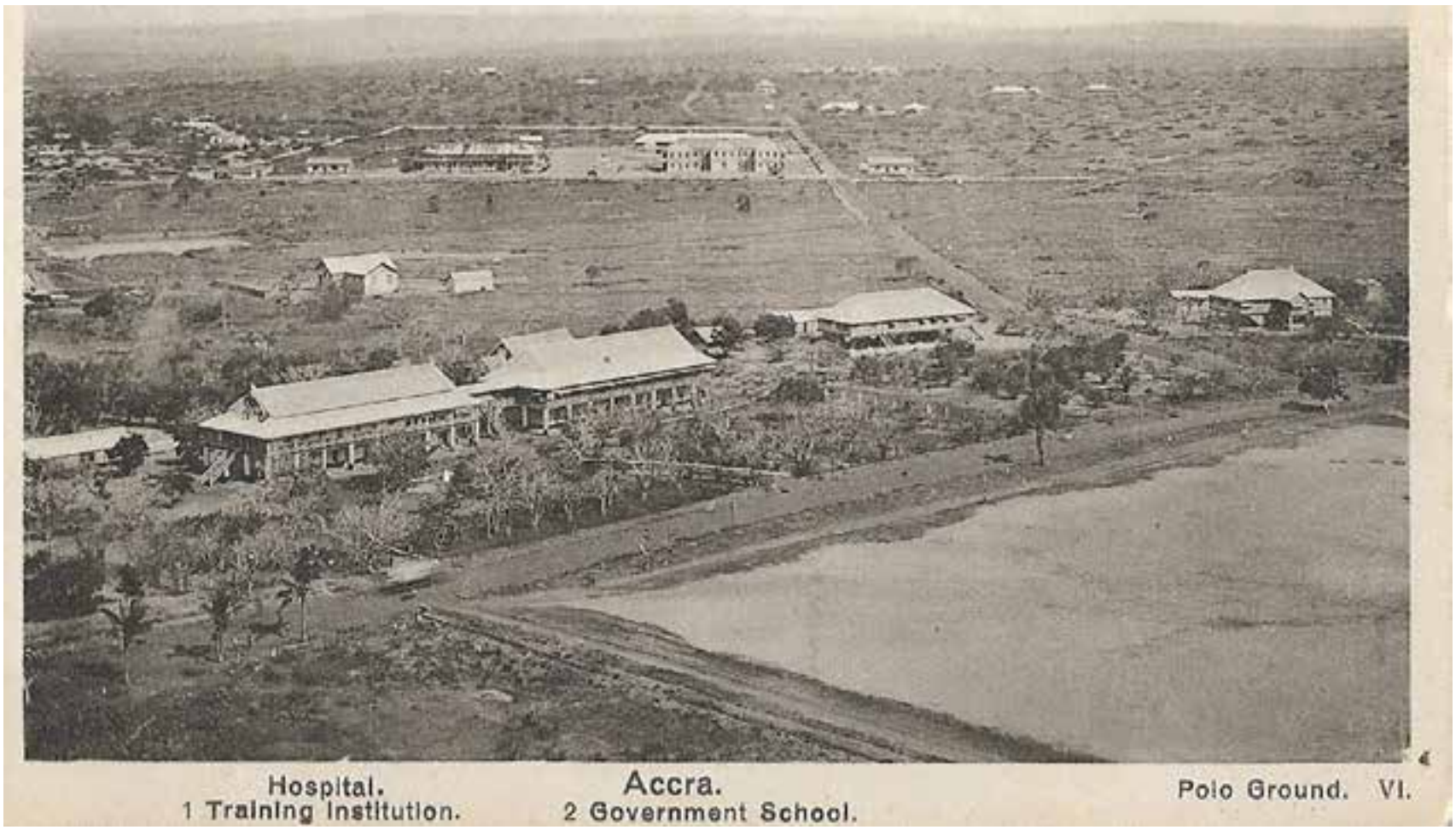
The 1880s were a period of consolidation for the British, and trade was sufficiently profitable to begin the construction of more permanent settlements. Accra had a purpose built hospital from 1882, and telegraph lines were erected in the same year, with public access granted in 1887 [45] and large offices built five years later.[46]

The African Direct Telegraph Company (established in 1885, Government subsidised and part-owned by shipping magnates Elder Dempster) ran a submarine cable from Cape Verde to the British West African territories terminating at Lagos.[47]

The four British West African 'colonies' could now communicate with each other more easily, and of course London. There was no longer a 2-3 week wait for the mail boat to deliver dispatches and messages which could now be relayed within a few hours, and between the Asanti Wars telegraph lines were extended inland to Kumasi.

The cable offices would have been one of the largest buildings to be constructed at the time, a pavilion standing in its own extensive grounds it was at the forefront of the latest technology. The architecture was of a grander nature to reflect its importance with the large staircase leading to the vernadah, but the language was still very much in the domestic typology. The Indirect Telegraph House on the High Street pursued a different approach, its exoskeletal frame with curved roof presented a utilitarian stance, photographed as an example of the forefront of technology. It was built equidistant between the administrative quarters and the mercantile areas to conveniently serve both.

The telegraph installation formed a physical chord tethering Britain to Gold Coast, and it changed the relationship with London.



8 Accra Postcard, showing hospital training, Boys' School and Polo Ground, c.1885, private collection.

9 Colonial Hospital at Accra, 1880-1905 ©Trustees of the British Museum, Af,A48.119

10 Accra Postcard, showing Cable Office, Wesleyan Mission, Native Club, c.1885, private collection.

11 Indirect Telegraph House at Accra, 1880-1905, ©Trustees of the British Museum , Af,A48.115

12 High Street showing Telegraph House on Right, 1880-1905, ©Trustees of the British Museum, Af,A64.54

13 Accra General Post Office, Courtesy of the Library & Archives Service, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, GB 0809 Macfie/03/04/03

The liberty (almost fiefdom) of the Governor could now be quickly checked and the role of the Colonial Secretary became more pivotal. The telegraph allowed the Governors, 'to convey a sense of urgency about situations which only they could gauge and handle with requisite speed.'[48] It was far more difficult for the Colonial Office to overlook these territories when telegrams could frequently enquire about the outcome of requests. Traditional mail was not ignored either, and the ability to convey physical objects and letters was also increasing in importance; 32 Post Offices were established throughout the Colony by the late 1890s. Stamp sales generated a significant income, and like every other enterprise, the postal system was expected to cover all of its costs.
The creation of a post office network not only allowed the exchange of letters but also had implications for town development.

The site of a post office would influence the land value in its vicinity and they functioned as important convergence points within the townscape. At Accra the site for the Post Office was fixed by 1908, providing a large wedged shaped plot where Horse Road (now Asafoatse Nettey Road) meets High Street, at the threshold of the commercial area.
It very much served as a triumphal monument signalling the importance of the settlement. Completed by 1915, the style of the architecture
sets it apart from the trading factories and warehouses – its somewhat exotic (some say 'Indian') motifs give it a strong civic presence that doesn't resort to Palladian classicism, instead, there is a playfulness brought about from the asymmetrical facades and small cupolas adorning the portico
and clocktower.

Footnotes
45 Internal telegraph lines were tested and installed in the late 1870s. See See report from Captain M. T. Sale, 9th July 1875, Gold Coast Public Works Report, The National Archives, CO 879/8/4.
46 Colonial Office, Annual Departmental Reports relating to the Gold Coast and Togoland, 1843-1957', Colonial Office (London, 1892), p.42.
47 Huurdeman, Anton A., 'The worldwide history of telecommunications', (New York, Wiley, 2003), p.137.
48 Peter Marsh, 'Joseph Chamberlain: Entrepreneur in Politics', (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1994), p.417-418.

14 Accra General Post Office, 2019, c. Author

15 Bank of British West Africa, 1897, UK National Archives, CO 1069/36/7

Raising Capital: Taxation and Banks

In 1888 a savings bank was established in Accra, introducing the banking hall type and together with the post office forming a central node and 'town centre' about which the markets would develop.
The first attempts by British traders to create a bank on the coast was at Lagos, but this quickly failed, and it was again Alfred Jones of Elder Dempster who established the Bank of British West Africa (BBWA) in Accra in 1897.[49]
This banking system allowed trade to expand from bartering, cowry shell and gold dust currency towards using silver coins as well as the means to borrow and transfer capital securely, thereby lessening the risk of trading by barter and credit (although they were reluctant to lend to African traders and increased their interest rates accordingly).[50]
The banks became major patrons of architecture in West Africa, but initially the venture was extremely risky and costs were kept to an absolute minimum. The BBWA cautiously traded from rented offices in a former Government building in Accra, where growth was slow but steady. This cautious approach proved lucrative and the bank also exploited the mining boom in Sekondi opening a branch there by 1902 and then to Kumasi by 1906.
In Accra the bank was located on a stretch of the High Street still dominated by banking offices today. The old government offices were subsequently rebuilt with a purpose designed hall in 1912.
This was demolished in 1966 and replaced with a slender five storey modernist structure with concrete lattice brise soleil and costing £700,000.[51]
The façade has now been clad in azure blue glazing, sealed, and air-conditioned – an overenthusiastic restoration that has completely eradicated the passive cooling ability of the original design, increased operating costs, and rendered the façade expressionless.
Elder Dempster was primarily a shipping firm, but as we have seen, it was part of a substantial consortium of companies trading in any market it could profit from. Amongst other business ventures (we will probably never know the full scope of their business) they were responsible for the commercial importation of bananas into the UK, as well as establishing tourism in the Canary Islands, and opening the first hotel at Sekondi.
It was ruthless in its quest for profit and a move into finance would allow them to control the fiscal as well as shipping and telegraph markets. They quickly obtained the Government's account and received commission on all imported silver coinage, as well as the mail account. They built the Mail Agency building on a prime spot opposite the Customs House (1924) on the High Street to accommodate the postal-shipping business. It subsequently became 'Bible House' in 1965 with the remit to translate and print the Scriptures into local languages and dialects.
BBWA's monopoly on the Coast finally ended when The Colonial Bank set up a branch in Accra in 1917. The building had a similar approach to the Mail Agency with its corner plot, Dutch gables and portico adding a sense of prestige and establishment confidence. The Colonial Bank was subsequently purchased by Barclays, becoming Barclays Dominion and Colonial Overseas (Barclays DCO) in 1925. Barclays DCO purchased a block on the High Street adjacent to BBWA and commissioned a new major headquarters in 1958. The perspective drawings of the bank are signed by a B. R. Williams, 1957.
In a similar move to the BBWA, the Barclays headquarters has been 'modernised' and whilst the overall form remains intact, its brise soleil have been amputated and replaced with air conditioning and sealed windows. The aerial photographs taken in the 1950s show how the bank was positioning itself amongst the large merchants who now occupied purpose-built offices having expanded their branch stores and agencies throughout the territory. But this is jumping ahead, and we need to examine the series of events, power struggles, and economic shifts that helped to shape and build the city prior to this point.
The merchants were there entirely for their own gain and clearly had a vested interest, but equally they expressed more empathy with the territory and their African colleagues and customers, than some of the careerist officials who viewed West Africa as a means to obtain prestigious commissions elsewhere.

16 Bank of British West Africa, Reproduced with kind permission of Unilever from an original in Unilever Archives, UAC 1/11/9/33/79

17 Bank of British West Africa Sekondi, Courtesy of Barclays Group Archives, 0038-1377

18 British Bank of West Africa, Sekondi, 2018, author

19 Metropole Hotel, Sekondi, (now demolished) private collection

20 British Bank of West Africa, Accra, 1912, private collection

21 British Bank of West Africa, Accra, 1966, private collection

22 British Bank of West Africa, Accra, 2019, Author.

23 Mail Agency, 1925, Reproduced with kind permission of Unilever from an original in Unilever Archives , UAC/1/11/9/36/6

24 Mail Agency 2019, Author

25 Customs 2019, Author

26 High Street showing Mail Agency, c.1925, private collection

It was the merchants, both European and African (in the absence of a democratic constituency), that held the Government to account and challenged the vast expenditure lavished on administering the Colony. Costs had escalated 400 per cent in just seven years (and administration at Lagos was half that of Gold Coast), whilst in the major towns there were 'no roads, sewers, lighted streets, and we regret to state', bemoaned a trader from Swanzy's, 'that we are unable to perceive any improvement whatever during the last 20 years in either the condition or Government of the Gold Coast'.[52]

The officials spent one-third of their time on leave with full pay, plus the cost of international transportation. Despite the cost of imported materials, expensive overland transportation and rather basic construction techniques the Public Works amounted to a mere 5 per cent of the Colony's budget.

Taxation was seen as the simplest means of raising funds and in 1896 a 'hut tax' was proposed. It failed as it offered no representation in exchange (a similar attempt caused a war in Sierra Leone) and again the Colony resorted to indirect taxation of imports and exports and obtaining royalties from the mining concessions in Western Region.

John Holt of the Blue Funnel Line was opposed to these poll taxes and posed an intriguing question, 'When will people realise that the produce of the land is the Black man's money?', before revealing why he considered this relevant, 'He has no other with which to buy the White man's goods'.[53]

27 The Colonial Bank, 1925, Courtesy of Barclays Group Archives, 0038-1415


1917

28 Perspective of proposed Barclays DCO, 1957, Courtesy of Barclays Group Archives, 0038-1415

29 Barclays DCO, 1957, Courtesy of Barclays Group Archives, 0038-1415

A rival of Elder Dempster, Holts also ventured into various business ventures in West Africa. Holt was concerned that any taxation deducted from Africans inevitably resulted in less being spent on his goods, coupled with potential price increases in the goods/ produce being sold by Africans to mitigate against the tax.
He was at least honest enough to admit that, 'They [the indigenous African population] made me what I am...their labour, their muscles, their enterprise, have given me everything I possess.'[54] He was eager to ensure this always remained the case. Taxation was one way that public works could be funded and improvements made to the town, but for the merchants based in the UK this was of little concern and they frequently held opposing views to the Government on these matters.

30 View of Accra from 1962, Courtesy of Barclays Group Archives, 0038-1415

31 View of Accra from 1962, Courtesy of Barclays Group Archives, 0038-1415

Footnote

49 Government of the Gold Coast, Reports on the Public Works Department 1895-1925-26, Annual Report for 1897, No 167/961897.
50 Marika Sherwood, "Elder Dempster and West Africa 1891-C.1940: The Genesis of Underdevelopment?" The International Journal of African Historical Studies, vol30, no2 (1997), pp. 253-276. See also Edward Reynolds, 'The Rise and Fall of an African Merchant Class on the Gold Coast 1830-1874', Cahiers d'Études africaines , vol 54, pp253-264.
51 Richard Fry, Bankers in West Africa (London, Hutchinson Benham, 1976), p.240.
52 Letter from Messrs. F and A Swanzy to Colonial Office, 20 December 1883, Further Correspondence Regarding the Affairs of the Gold Coast, Cmd. 3687, p.97.

32 Barclays DCO, 2019, Author

Refined by Fire: Imported Labour and Model Housing in Accra

The difficulties in providing basic amenities, sanitation and infrastructure were not insignificant, and certainly dominated the debate over Public Works priorities. Housing for Africans was of little concern, but plans were made for a Kru Village in the 'extreme west of Accra' and a Hausa cantonment in 1895. [55] The Krumen (or Kroomen) were migrant workers originally from the Liberian coast, and they became particularly important to the British, employed as seamen, navigators and 'carriers'. They were recruited in such numbers that the French and Liberian Governments attempted to limit their migration to Ghana by imposing a 'head tax' prompting the development of this new village in Accra. [56]

'Owing to the large amount of work going on...it was found difficult to obtain sufficient labour at a reasonable rate of pay. It was therefore decided to import Kroo-boys under contract, and it then became necessary to provide them with quarters. This has been done at a cost of £337.' [57]

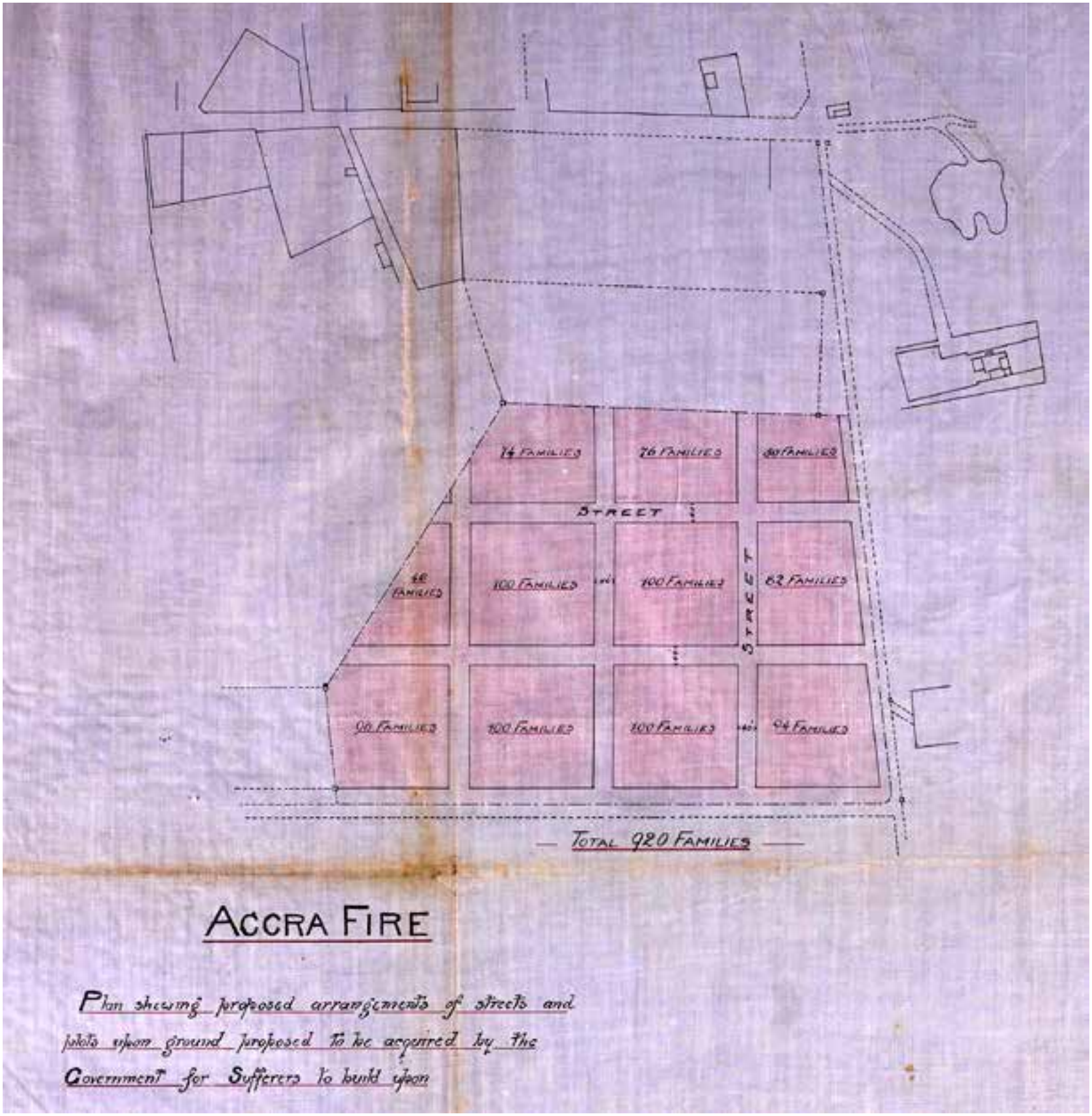
They were an essential part of trading on the Coast. Without this labour the goods, having travelled thousands of miles by sea, could not be unloaded from the ships anchored in deep water a mile or so from shore. Everything was lugged by hand and canoe, and then transported to its final destination on the heads of carriers, or hand-pulled carts. [58]
Labour was perennially short, and the creation of a village for the Krumen was an attempt to retain their services and ensure a stable supply of ample workers, whereas the Hausa cantonment was to house the Gold Coast Corps. The Corps mainly employed 'Hausa' recruits, who were preferred to West Indian or European regiments because they were considerably cheaper, and it was claimed, survived the 'climate'. [59] The villages were part of an attempt to stem labour shortages, and to entice Hausa and Kru to remain and settle.
Difficulties were also faced in recruiting adequate European staff due to the Coast's reputation and those who could be enticed were not always dependable. A report from 1900, for example, notes the 'absence of qualification of Mr Borrows for road work, he is a farmer', and other rogue 'supervisors' and 'tradesmen' were often found wanting of their professed talents upon arrival at the coast. [60]
The slow development and lack of advancement was defended at length by the administration who put slow progress down to almost every attribute of the Coast including,

'the clearing of dense forests; the unhealthiness of the climate, necessitating short terms of residence in the country; the heavy rainfall; the scarcity and poor quality of labour; landing difficulties; and the necessity of working from a single base, prevent rapid progress; and in consequence, increase the cost of construction, which on the Gold Coast, was further enhanced by the scarcity of ballast.' [61]

As well as these housing interventions for the preferred workers, public latrines were built in Accra in an attempt to improve sanitation of the town.
It was the first step towards a sewage system and controlled removal of human waste through a 'pan

35 Horse Road, National Archives, CO 1069-40-26/38

33 Surf Boats at Accra Harbour, With Kind Permission of Wirral Council, E2012/481 Courtesy of Barclays Group Archives, 0038-1415

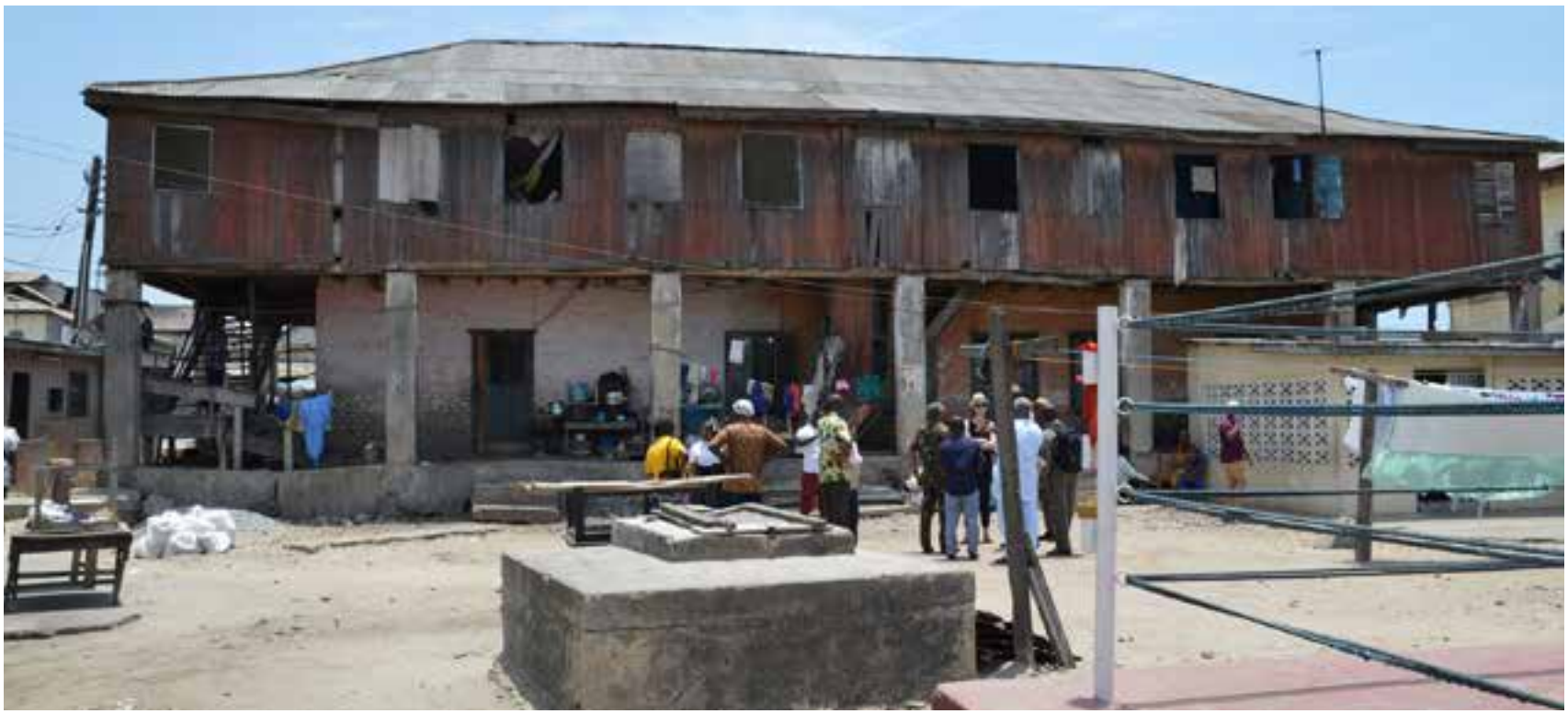


36 Accra Plan following the fire, 1894, National Archives, MR 1/825

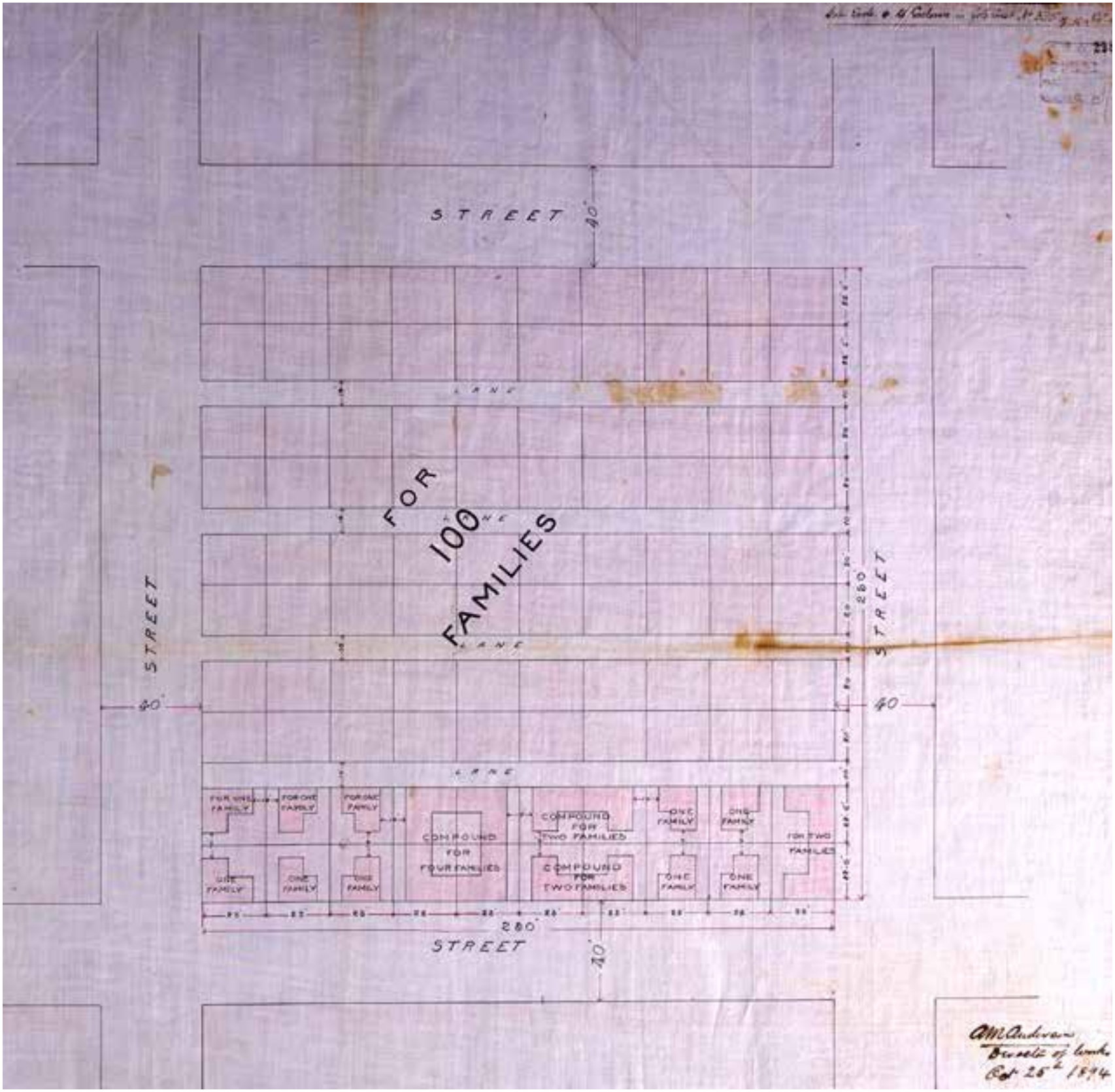
system'. These attempts were generally unsuccessful as they were not located in close proximity to people who were expected to use them, and nor were they properly maintained and cleaned.[62]
Latrine use was mandatory from 1875 but impossible to enforce.[63]
It would take a major fire in James Town in 1894 before any real changes in the housing for the local populations could be implemented (or imposed).
The scorched land was acquired and a series of new streets eventually laid out along with a new main drain discharging into the lagoon.[64]
The people rendered homeless by the fire were given temporary shelter in a newly constructed market hall,[65] and 17 acres of charred and condemned housing was cleared in 1895,

'the Government saw their opportunity of opening up what was originally a most insanitary district of Accra where houses were huddled together, and resolved to clear out the whole area and construct new wide streets. A survey was made of the whole of this shewing every property; subsequently it was decided by the Government to acquire only the land and property necessary for the streets...'[66]

It was an approach that became known as 'site and services', the Government would lay out the roads and drainage and specify the plot size, as well as insisting on particular house types, materials and construction. It became an unofficial building regulation heavily modelled on 1888 Bombay Municipal Corporation Act. Mills Road, Bruce Road, Hansen Road and Bannerman Road were driven through the site as a result of this incident and remain as key thoroughfares in James Town today, named after elite African families of traders and lawyers.[67] The abrupt threshold from these wide streets into the congested layout of Usher Town still remains. The generous road widths and large plot sizes enticed some fine construction and development, and a few of the original larger houses survive, such as the Konuah House, Allotey Bruce-Konuah's family house. Historian and former Mayor, Nat Nuno-Amarteifio ponders whether the fire was set deliberately to force the evacuation and subsequent re-development and ordering.[68]
It is certainly a possibility, and some owners of the land refused to accept the forced eviction and held out until 1904 before finally accepting the compensation offered.[69]
Initially housing was set out between the main roads of 12.1m (40ft) widths, with service alleys of 3.3m (10ft) running between the backs of the houses.
The smaller plots were arranged in groups of around 100 houses accommodating a total of 920 families.

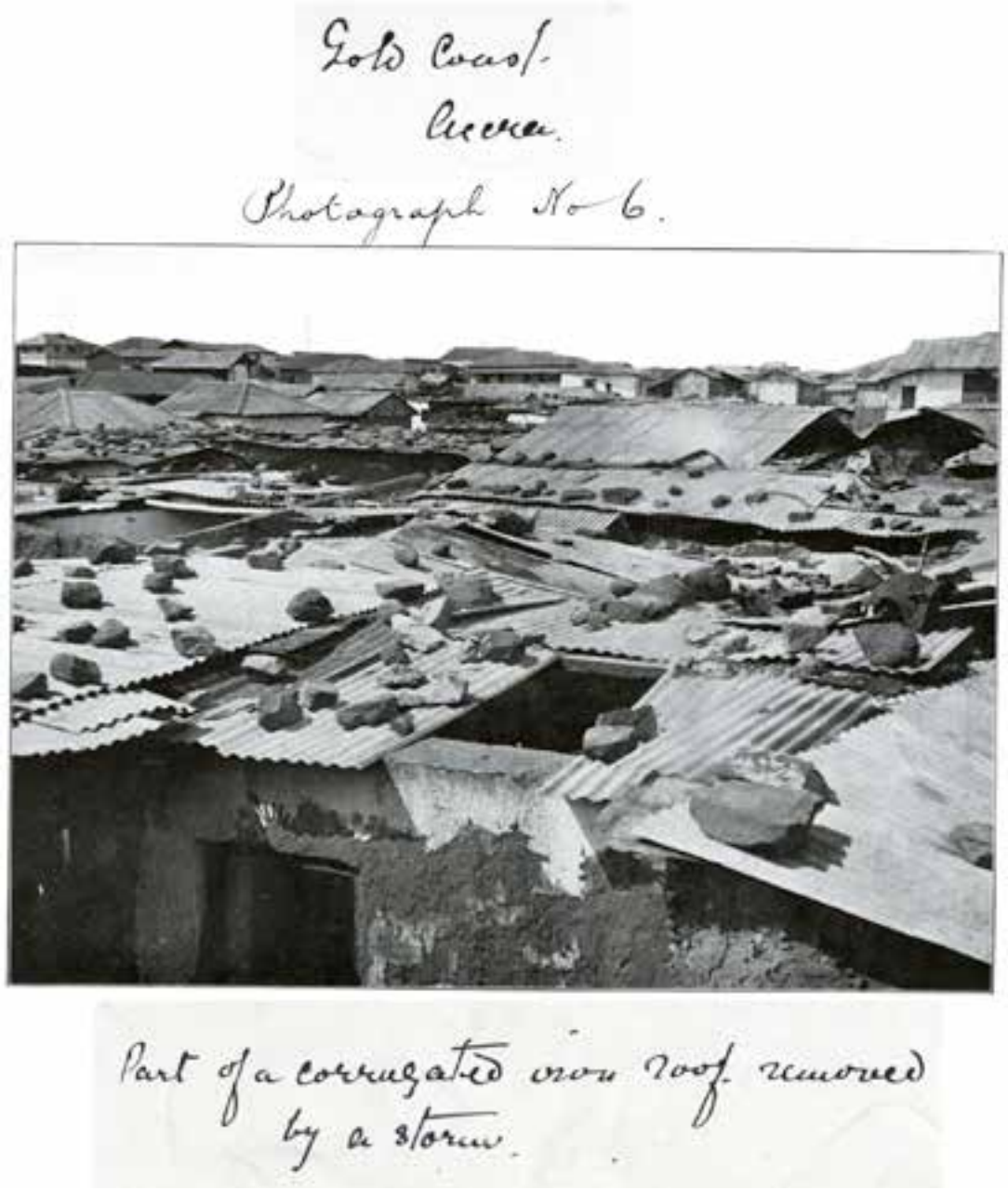


37 Konuah House, Bruce Road 2019, Author



38 Accra Plan following the fire, 1894, National Archives, MR 1/825

This approach became somewhat ubiquitous, but it was generous and far-sighted for the time, ensuring service provision, adequately wide streets and sufficient spacing to avert the spread of fire, ensure ventilation, and accommodate drainage runs. It was also a means of regulating the domestic realm, and creating a homogenous approach by which population levels, densities and rent levels were calculated. It could be known, named, regulated, policed and navigated.



39 James Town informal settlements, The National Archives, CO1069/45

Footnotes

55 Government of the Gold Coast, Reports on the Public Works Department 1895-1925-26, Annual Report for 1895, No 167/96, p.42.
56 Ibid, p.40-41.
57 Report on the Public Works Department for the Year 1903, Annual Departmental Reports relating to the Gold Coast and Togoland, 1843-1957, p.5.
58 Government of the Gold Coast, Reports on the Public Works Department 1895-1925-26, Annual Report for 1895, No 167/96, p.42.
59 "we have not had fewer than 300 West Indian soldiers on that Coast. Now, a West Indian soldier costs £100 a-year; whereas a Houssa costs only £30 a-year. Consequently, we could maintain 1,000 Houssas, who would be more effective, for the same amount that 300 West Indian troops now cost", The Earl of Carnarvon, 12 May 1874, http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1874/may/12/observations#S3V0219P0_18740512_HOL_3
60 See A. M. Anderson, Report from Director of Public Works, The National Archives 25 September, 1900, CO96/363/19. Other reports from earlier in the year note unsatisfactory work due to 'over indulgence in alcohol', see CO 96/360/57.
61 HMSO, 'Colonial Reports: Gold Coast 1903 No.426', (London, HMSO, 1904), p.43.
62 William John Ritchie Simpson would later give a systematic appraisal of the state of each latrine in the city in 'Sanitary matters in various parts of West African colonies', (London, HMSO, 1909).
63 See report from Captain M. T. Sale, 9th July 1875, Gold Coast Public Works Report, The National Archives, CO 879/8/4.
64 Colonial Report no 159 Gold Coast, Annual Report for 1894 (London, HMSO, 1895), p.28
65 Colonial Report no 136 Gold Coast, Annual Report for 1893 (London, HMSO, 1895), p.8
66 Government of the Gold Coast, Reports on the Public Works Department 1895-1925-26, Annual Report for 1895, No 167/96, p.35
67 See Allister Macmillan, 'The Red Book of West Africa: historical and descriptive, commercial and industrial facts, figures and resources', (London, Frank Cass, 1968) and M. R. Doortmont, 'The pen-pictures of modern Africans and African celebrities by Charles Francis Hutchison : a collective biography of elite society in the Gold Coast Colony', (Leiden, Brill, 2005).
68 See https://adesawyerr.wordpress.com/2015/11/10/the-definitive-story-of-james-town-british-accra-by-nat-nuno-amarteifio/ for an excellent history of the town and photographs by Allotey Bruce-Konuah.
69 Government of the Gold Coast, Reports on the Public Works Department 1895-1925-26, Annual Report for 1904, no 167/96, p.6.

Mosquitos and the Development of the Imperial Estate

The idea of development and somehow enhancing the built fabric of the colonies was eagerly pursued following Joseph Chamberlain's appointment as Colonial Secretary in 1895. His infamous speech proclaiming the colonies a vast Imperial estate ripe for improvement was just the encouragement the merchants and capitalists required.[70]

West Africa, still largely in its virgin state, and so much closer to the UK than most of its other colonies offered vast opportunity, particularly, Chamberlain believed, if the interior could be made accessible for trade. His approach had been shaped by a decade of agitation and lobbying. In 1883 the Manchester Chamber of Commerce demanded to know why trade had not increased and a similar petition was made by the Chambers of Commerce at London, Liverpool and Glasgow all requesting that Asanti be included within the protectorate, and administered by Government.[71] The Berlin Conference and so-called 'scramble for Africa' followed and further enticed territorial expansion with John Holt and Alfred Jones both attending the conference and shaping Britain's subsequent actions.

One of the main setbacks to expansion and development of the 'estate' was the health risks and high mortality rates. The costs due to sick days, invaliding and death were considerable - if this could be addressed and the territory made 'safe' and 'healthy', it was believed trade and development could show few bounds. Clearly aware of these health risks Chamberlain decreed all doctors working in the tropics were to receive specialist training. It was a significant period for medical research with a number of important discoveries concerning parasites and the spread of disease.

Following Chamberlain's plea a committee was formed by Alfred Jones with a consortium of ship-owners, merchants, hospital, and university staff to establish a school of Tropical Medicine in Liverpool. The School would not only train doctors in tropical disease, but also have a major research agenda. Jones agreed to fund the school for three years and secured additional sponsors. Its first mission was sent to West Africa just a few months later, lead by lecturer Ronald Ross with two other expeditions following shortly afterwards.[72]

At the same time and with the backing of the Colonial Office, another tropical medical school was created in London, lead by Patrick Manson (the Colonial Office Medical Advisor). It was a prolifically volatile time for science, and whilst discoveries rapidly emerged so too did resistance to their findings. The Geographical Society heard a lecture by Louis Westenra Sambon on the 'Acclimatization of Europeans in Tropical Lands' in 1898.[73] Sambon set out to challenge the long-held view that the tropical climate was somehow pathological, and he explicitly made the case that Europeans could live in tropical zones.

He carefully dismantled the meteorological argument that tropical climates resulted in disease, putting forward the theory that most health problems were caused by parasites and microbes.

He also rebuked numerous 'superstitions' that had become enshrined in so many health guides and physicians' diagnoses (e.g. European children over five years old cannot thrive in the tropics, Europeans cannot undertake physical work there, reduced fertility, and so on).[74]

Delivered to an audience of hard-bitten imperialists it was a brave lecture, and completely counter to the prevailing norms, exposing the hypocrisy, ignorance, and prejudice that had posed as scientific reason and rational thought. Patrick Manson was also present and confessed, 'I now firmly believe in the possibility of tropical colonization by the white races'[75] and that, 'heat and moisture are not in themselves the direct cause of any tropical disease. The direct cause of 99 per cent of these diseases are germs'.[76]

Sambon tried further to win over the audience,

'So long as it was believed that the peculiar meteorological conditions were the direct cause of the unhealthiness of the tropics, so long did it seem impossible to secure health there, for we cannot materially influence the weather. But now that we know that the unhealthiness of the tropics depends on the plants and animals of the tropics-the pathological fauna and flora, the position becomes much more hopeful. For what known plant or animal is there that man, in virtue of his intellect, cannot slay or protect himself against, provided he knows what it is and where it is.'[77]

These views were not readily accepted. Whilst parts of the tropics were viewed to be 'similar' climatically to Italy, or merely hot, it was the combination of heat and humidity that was considered so debilitating. This debate, and others like it, descended into anecdotal eugenics and speculative theories about the degeneration of European races over the course of a few generations in these conditions.

The explorer and imperialist Harry Johnston scoffed at the idea that climate was not somehow linked to health, as did the other inveterate empire builders listening to the debate. Mary Kingsley was also present – but either remained silent in agreement with Sambon and Manson, after all she had also spent considerable time in the tropics, or perhaps her views were drowned out in the blinkered din that ensued.

Whilst on his first mission to West Africa Ronald Ross finally proved that the Anopheles mosquito was the vector that spread the plasmodium parasite between humans, resulting in malaria. This discovery, together with an increased understanding of 'germs' rapidly transformed how the tropics, and West Africa in particular, was viewed and developed. What followed however was a major split in how to counter the mosquito threat. Manson saw the problem in purely clinical and scientific terms – all that needed to be done was to eradicate the germs, whereas for Ross, it became a problem of practical sanitation. Having spent considerable time in India he was aware of the work taking place there, particularly under officers such as William John Ritchie Simpson.

Simpson had begun a pragmatic and systematic mapping of disease as well as a programme of inspection and education, an approach emulated by Ross who proclaimed 'living conditions, diet and sanitation as the main determinants of health'.[78]

Whereas Manson wanted to research and develop parasitological and entomological based understanding, both agreed upon and preferred to isolate and distance Europeans from the threat.

Ross's approach was rather simple, he would reduce the number of mosquitos by eliminating the places where they might breed, preventing bites by promoting sleeping under nets, and oiling bodies of water that couldn't be drained to kill off larvae.

Liverpudlian merchants sponsored the expedition with Alfred Jones offering free passage in his ships to Ross and his team, John Holt provided the crude petroleum and creosote required for larvae eradication, F. and A. Swanzy and Edmund Muspratt also donated tools, cement, and whatever else the mission required.[79] The ship-owners clearly had a vested interest in seeing health improvements in this part of the world, especially if they were to begin cultivating the interior and they eagerly sponsored the venture.

Jones would also go on to fund the Institute of Commercial Research in the Tropics, who conducted research into agricultural industries.[80]

The sanitary route had major implications for the built environment as it was concerned with practical and physical modification of the city. 'Cleanliness' and hygiene fell under this remit, including removal of detritus, slaughterhouse provision, food storage, manufacturing and the quality and density of general domestic properties – what we would now consider 'public health'. In addition, and of utmost importance was the supply of drinking water and removal of waste water - neither of which had been satisfactorily provided. By its very nature this approach was a more intrusive and confrontational mode of operation. It required inspections and investment in projects that were sometimes resented by residents and traders, and garnered little political traction.

By definition, the inspections and rules granted permission for the authorities to regulate and control. It could quickly become a form of domination, and a means by which the territories viewed as strongholds of African control (such as James Town) could be broken-down and infiltrated, and made to physically conform.

By the early 1920s, almost 500,000 homes were inspected in a single year, and over 3000 fines issued to the occupants where larvae or mosquitos were discovered. The prosecution rate of 0.06 per cent per cent did not merit this intrusion or expense.

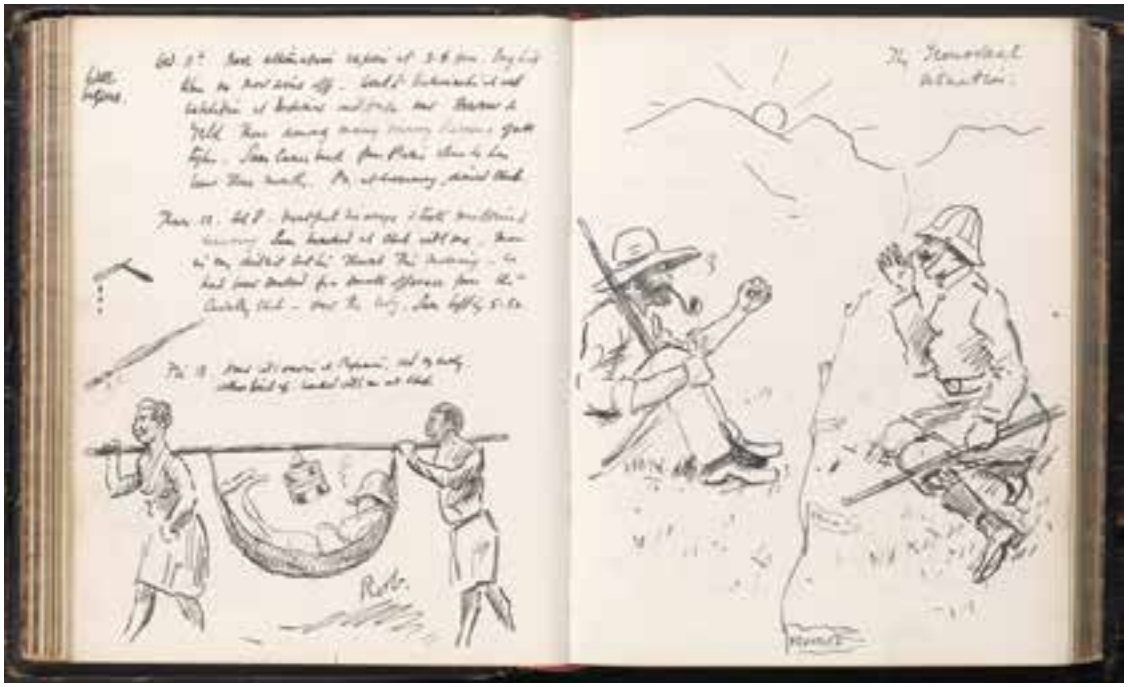
There was always a dual aspect to the policies, for example, regular and straight streets were required for an effective drainage system, but equally this aided the policing and control of the streets coupled with a system for naming and numbering these places and properties. It was necessary to address malaria, but inspecting homes wasn't the best use of resources nor an appropriate method of quashing the disease.

Footnotes

70 See Joseph Chamberlain, 'Foreign and Colonial Speeches' (Manchester and New York, Routledge, 1897), p149.
71 W. Walton Claridge, 'A history of the Gold Coast and Ashanti from the earliest times to the commencement of the twentieth century' vol 2, (London, J. Murray, 1915), p.368-9.
72 See Ross et al.,'Report of the Malaria Expedition of the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine' (Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 1900).
73 L Westenra Sambon, 'Acclimatization of Europeans in Tropical Lands', The Geographical Journal, vol 12, no6., December 1898, pp.589-599.
74 See Charles Scovell Grant 'West African Hygiene, or, Hints on the preservation of health and the treatment of tropical diseases more specially on the West Coast of Africa' (Gold Coast Colony Government, Standford, 1884).
75 P. Manson, et al., 'Acclimatization of Europeans in Tropical Lands: Discussion', The Geographical Journal, vol. 12, no. 6 (Dec., 1898), pp. 599-606, 599.
76 Ibid, p.600.
77 Ibid, p.600.
78Michael Worboys, 'The Emergence of Tropical Medicine: a study in the establishment of a scientific speciality', in Gerard Lemain et al., (eds), Perspectives on the emergence of scientific disciplines (Chicago, Aldine, 1976), p90.
79 See Ronald Ross 'Memoirs' (London, J. Murray, 1923). Swanzy dontated £400 to the mission, see London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Letter from Ross to Swanzy, 18 December 1901, GB 0809 Ross/76/01/07,
80 The Institute was based at Liverpool University. See Viscount Mountmorres, 'The Commercial Possibilities of West Africa', (London, Williams and Norgate, 1907).

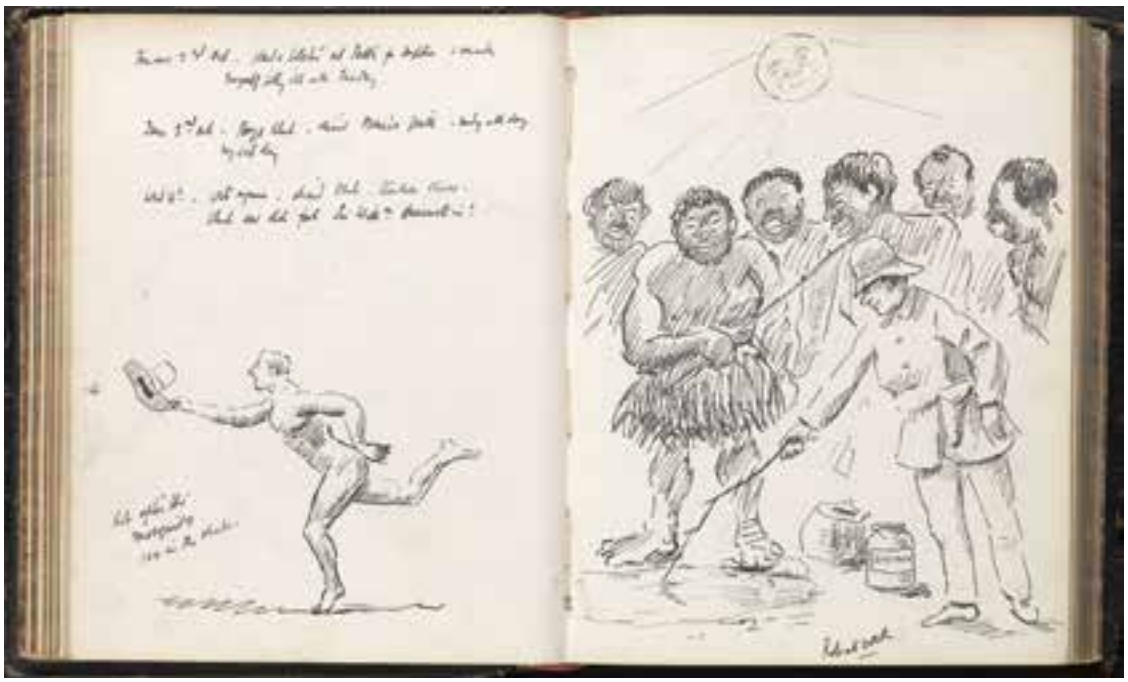
A noisome and pestilential district

It is a truism that one tends to find what one is looking for, and in the case of these sanitation officers they tended to find poor hygienic practice, unsanitary living conditions, and mosquitos - but the 1900 Liverpool Mission to Accra found no puddles in the town nor were any Anopheles observed – the trip being taken during the winter when rainfall is scarce. Their report crowed how the official population was now housed in 'spacious and well-ventilated' bungalows a mile away from the 'menace' of the African town, whereas the commercial European population was still to be found at the shore and in 'close proximity to the native huts'.[81] Whilst acknowledging that Accra is not the 'death-trap its reputation would warrant to believe' (Assistant Lecturer) Robert Fielding-Ould still held on to a view that the climate ('quite apart from any specific disease which may there exist') is a drain on the European, and over time reduces the ability to work and increases irritability, anaemia and other ailments.



40 Sketch from Feilding Fielding-Ould (1870-1930), Fielding-Ould Diary, 1899 January 1-1914, pen and ink, Yale Centre for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection

A descriptive, if predictable review of James Town followed, outlining the lack of a defined street plan, absence of a waste management strategy, poor water storage, and overcrowding resulting in a 'noisome and pestilential district'.[82]



41 Sketch from Feilding Fielding-Ould (1870-1930), Fielding-Ould Diary, 1899 January 1-1914, pen and ink, Yale Centre for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection

It wasn't all negative however, and Christianborg was singled out for its large concrete drains, wide streets and cleanliness (no doubt delivered because of its administrative significance), and yet more could be done with adequate funding. A medical research laboratory had also been established in the town and gradual improvements to public health and combating mosquitos and were being made. It looked like a promising start to the century, but Ross's funding for the research trips was all but spent and future missions from the school did not have the same verve for practical public health.[83]

Further Reports to the Malaria Committee commissioned by the Royal Society was also published in 1900 and specifically investigated Accra's wells, pits, tanks and marshes. The authors' conclusion was that Africans were the 'prime agent' in the spread of malaria to Europeans. They stated that, 'were a European to sleep in any native hut without a properly arranged mosquito net, he would be exposed to certain infection. Even if he were to sleep a single night within a hundred yards of any native village , the risk would be very great.'[84]

It was easier for the report to target the African population than the mosquito or the parasite (and also overlook that malaria was prevalent in southern Europe too), and it went on to recommend, 'the first means of obvious protection for Europeans consists in avoiding native quarters with their infected population...'[85]

42 View of Accra West showing Chief John Quartey's house, 1880-1905, ©Trustees of the British Museum, Af,A48.117

James Town was specifically targeted, and any Europeans residing there were deemed to be 'living in the midst of dangerous sources of infection…the residents here are certain sooner or later to suffer from malaria'.[86] The European traders in James Town were indeed living in very close quarters to the African population.
This wasn't unusual, it was the normal practice, indeed many European establishments had African landlords and relied on a close network of local collaborators and businesses in order to trade and survive. To simply live elsewhere was not feasible.

Despite knowing that mosquitos were spreading the malaria parasite, and also acknowledging that infection was also particularly high in the European cantonment ('for some reason') the authors still attributed Africans as the 'prime agent' because of the high level of infections observed in African children.[87] Other erroneous beliefs included that the African adults were largely immune and that mosquitos bit only at night.
This excused adult Africans working in close proximity to Europeans during the day-time and legitimised the creation of a night-time curfews enforcing residential segregation with exemptions for certain individuals and emergencies. In light of the absurdity and impracticality of these notions it is of little surprise that they were not fully enforced.
The Royal Society report held immense influence over racial segregation arguments that were to follow, but apart from insisting on physical isolation it offered nothing in terms of how malaria could be fought. Rather than targeting the disease and its vectors, it focused entirely on the most infected human hosts.

This report and the 1901 Towns Act, (first published in 1892) had a major impact on how Ghanaian towns were to develop, it established a set of rules governing future development to 'provide for the better regulation of towns and promoting public health.' Rules for the construction of new buildings and streets were set out, as well as the enforcement of building numbers and street names. It gave the Director of Public Works the power to establish local building regulations, specify the layout of roads, lanes and passages, building lines, street elevations, and ground floor level.
They could also stipulate rules concerning building heights and the lighting and ventilation of buildings. This enforced a particular mode of construction and living, coupled with increased powers and the right to levy fines for non-compliance. It became part of the consolidation of British control and shaped the future development of the territory. Furthermore, and beyond any notion of health or well-being, the regulations also extended to more subjective notions with powers to prevent the 'disfigurement' of the town or to reject buildings 'not in keeping with the architectural character of the neighbourhood'.[88]
The enforcement of good taste and arbitration of style also gave authority for demolition and destruction of works, as well as setting out 'open space'. Control over what could take place and where was granted through these acts, and business ventures or housing developments could be kept in abeyance or denied based on rules that were somewhat subjective and arbitrary. It resulted in the control of a vast territory beyond the fortress walls. The built fabric was becoming representative of a particular agenda and system of governance and permitted the British to develop the town in their own image, according to their business objectives and their perceptions of good taste.
A public meeting was held in Liverpool on 25th June 1900 where it was announced,

'steps should be taken immediately . . . to improve the conditions of life for Europeans in the trop ics in every possible direction, by the segregation of Europeans, improved sanitation, better water supply, clearance of bush near towns, light railways to the mountains...'[89]

The overt reference to the European population was, sadly, how aspects of the business community viewed the problem and that the Africans were beyond their remit. Ross took a more pragmatic and practical view and saw little long term benefit in simply moving the Europeans away from the Africans and prescribing a lifetime of quinine (which as Ross noted would cost Government nothing).
However even Ross had to accept that,

'...the most brilliant results of sanitation are of a negative character; not something tangible, like a new post-office, school, or hospital, but a mere absence of what few people ever see – illness and death'.[90]

The lack of a death or illness is difficult to demonstrate, especially when records and statistics were unreliable, and the dull reporting of drains and sewers was embellished with vivid descriptions of the general conditions. Not only did it spice-up the writing and present an intriguing exotic fascination with the plight of Africa, it also reinforced the need for further research, and amongst the merchant and 'well-meaning' classes created an urgent sense that 'something must be done'. West Africa was only ever presented through this lens, it was known, understood and to an extent became how the Europeans' presented it. The Liverpool merchants announced that they were 'spending a good deal of money in promoting sanitation, but they would not begrudge more if they could save life.'[91]

They agreed the following resolutions,
'1. that a fully qualified medical officer of health, with an adequate sanitary staff should be appointed to each of the principal West African towns, whose sole duty it shall be to attend to sanitary matters in those towns.
That there should also be appointed for all West African colonies an expert Sanitary Commissioner, on the Indian model of sanitary organisation.'[92]

Having set out these resolutions the Liverpool and Manchester merchants secured a meeting with Joseph Chamberlain, but he 'trembled' at the potential costs of sanitary commissioners claiming it would 'set spies over his African officials'.[93]

It was a remarkable stance to adopt but entirely consistent with his approach.
There was even concern over the costs of draining pools, clearing trenches, oiling pools and removing rubbish – even though these sums were paltry in comparison to illness, invaliding and hospital bed care.[94] There was an ideological barrier between the simple filling of pits, providing mosquito nets and quinine, with the desire to build and equip hospitals. Whilst this research dismissed previous notions of a toxic miasma and noxious climate – it had the unfortunate effect of shifting the blame from the environment to the people. The local inhabitants were now viewed as pathogenic, or proxies of disease. This helped to reinforce certain racist agendas and in particular the idea of segregated dwellings.

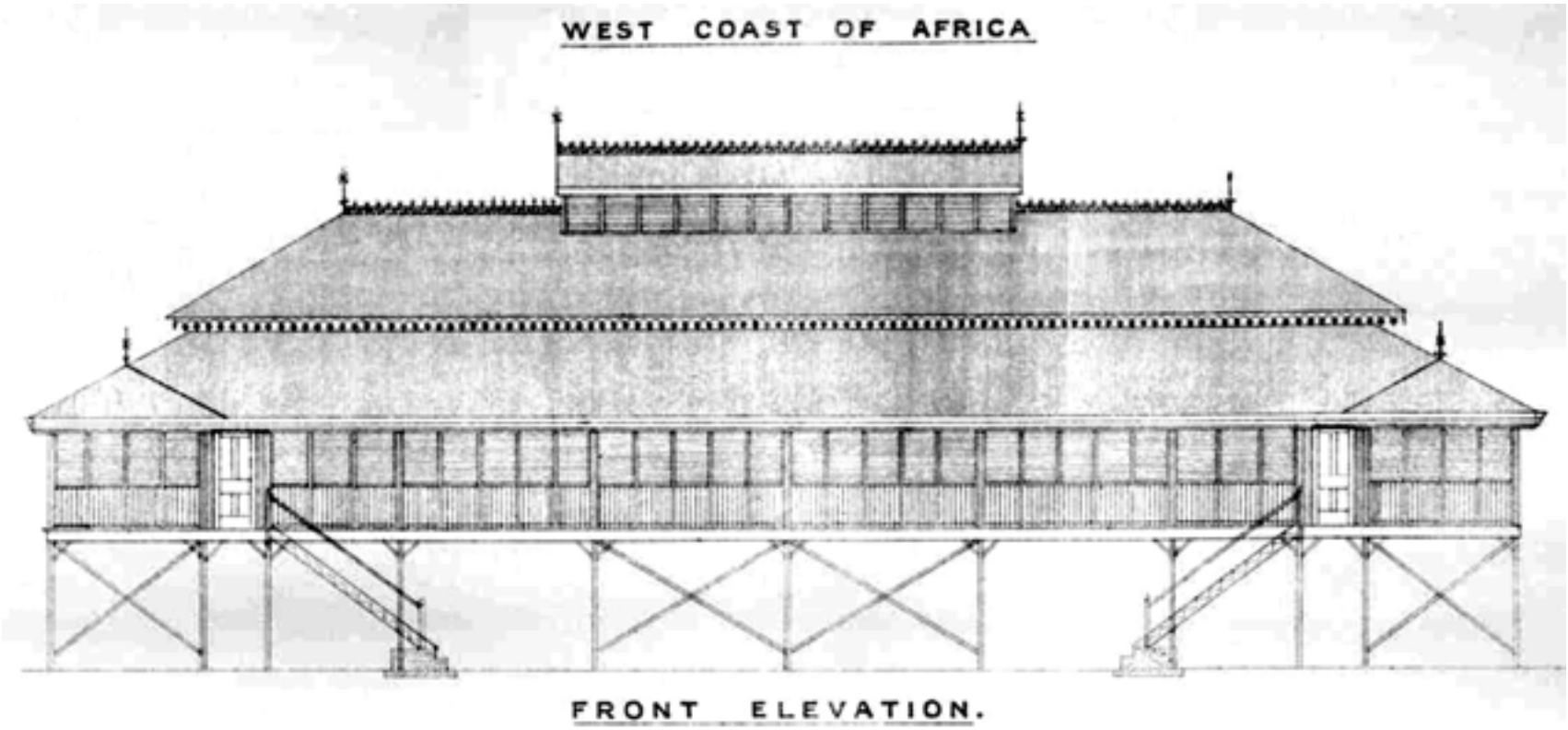
Footnotes

81 See Ross et al.,'Report of the Malaria Expedition of the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine' (Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 1900). p53.
82 Ibid, p54.
83 A total of 11 missions were sent to West Africa between 1899-1904. See Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine Historical Record 1898-1920, (Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 1920), p.73.
84 S. R. Christophers and J. W. W. Stephens, Further Reports to the Malaria Committee, Royal Society (London, Harison and Sons, 1900), p.16.
85 Ibid., p.18.
86 Ibid., p.18.
87 Ibid., p.18.
88 Ordinances of the Gold Coast, The Towns Ordinance Act, 1892, (London, Stevens and Sons, 1898).
89 Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine Historical Record 1898-1920, (Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 1920), p.19.
90 Ronald Ross 'Memoirs' (London, J. Murray, 1923), P.486.
91 Ronald Ross Archive, 'Sanitation in West Africa: Conference in Liverpool in the Anglo-African Argus and Gold Coast Globe', London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine Archive, 1903, GB 0809 Ross/113/23/10.
92 Ibid.
93 Ronald Ross 'Memoirs' (London, J. Murray, 1923). P.486.
94 Ibid. p429.

Planning Accra: Venturing beyond the Castle, Segregation, Bungalows, Mapping the City: Plague and Planning

The maps of Accra reveal the gradual surveying and documentation of the town as it developed and grew, and like all maps they have a particular agenda. The early plans were concerned with improving the landing stages and did not venture into nor provide any detail of the 'native' quarters. Instead they are represented by a jagged line that envelopes the space to indicate its unplanned layout and small winding alleyways. Captain Sale's plan of 1875 whilst focusing on the landing stages, included very little detail on the town's layout, only showing the main roads and one or two buildings. The town remained something of an unknown territory with the European presence restricted to trading houses and factories that lined the route from the Castle to James Town, and thereby becoming the High Street. It was on the tract of land between the Castle and James Town that the first 'bungalows' were commissioned in 1893 forming what became known as Victoriaburg.[95] According to his wife, it was only due to the apparent 'initiative and insistence' of Governor Frederick

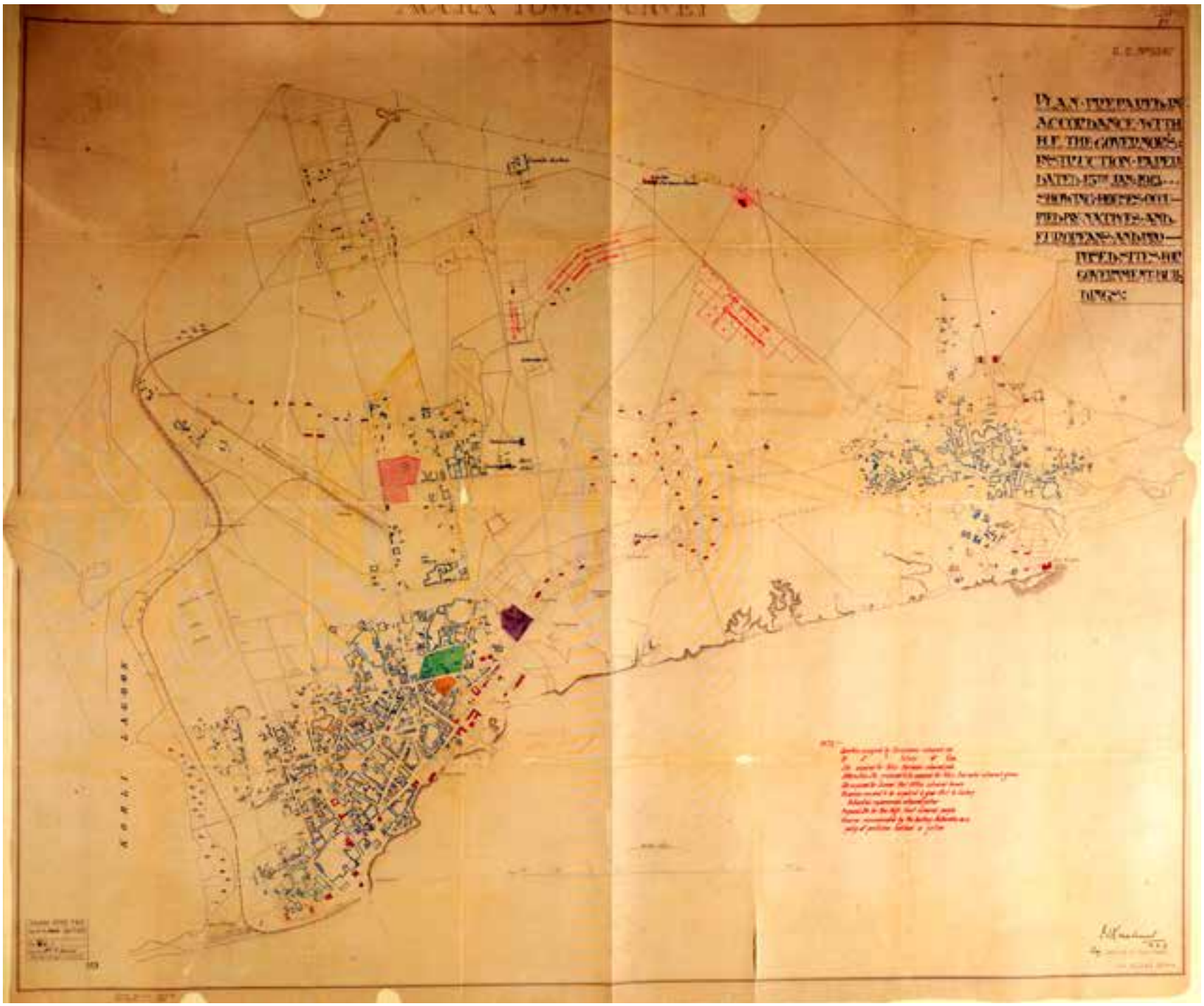
43 The Ridge, UK National Archives, CO 1069/40/1914-19302



44 Bungalow Designs, 1906, Private Collection

Hodgson that the British Officials began to be housed in a separate quarter in Accra, and the first bungalows 'raised some ten feet from the ground on iron pillars, have been built on sanitary sites' away from James Town and Christianborg.[96]
A small settlement of bungalows was developed with spacious compounds on an elevated site that is still known as the Ridge.
The piloti enabled the cooling sea breeze to flow around the dwellings as well as creating a far grander and imposing composition. The roof projected beyond the walls by 2.4m (8ft.) forming a verandah, keeping the interior in permanent shade and preventing the sun from striking the walls.
The PWD report professed, 'The erection of comfortable quarters of this kind will no doubt form an important factor in the health of officers'[97] and a type was cast that would vary little during the next fifty years.
By 1908 a more definitive survey and plan had been produced showing all of the major roads and permanent structures, which were meticulously measured and identified. African properties were coloured in blue, and the major European trading and Governmental buildings highlighted in Red.

45 Accra High Street, Reproduced with kind permission of Unilever from an original in Unilever Archives, GB1752.UAC/1/11/9/33/77



46 Accra Town Survey, 1908, UK National Archives, MR 1/1828/2

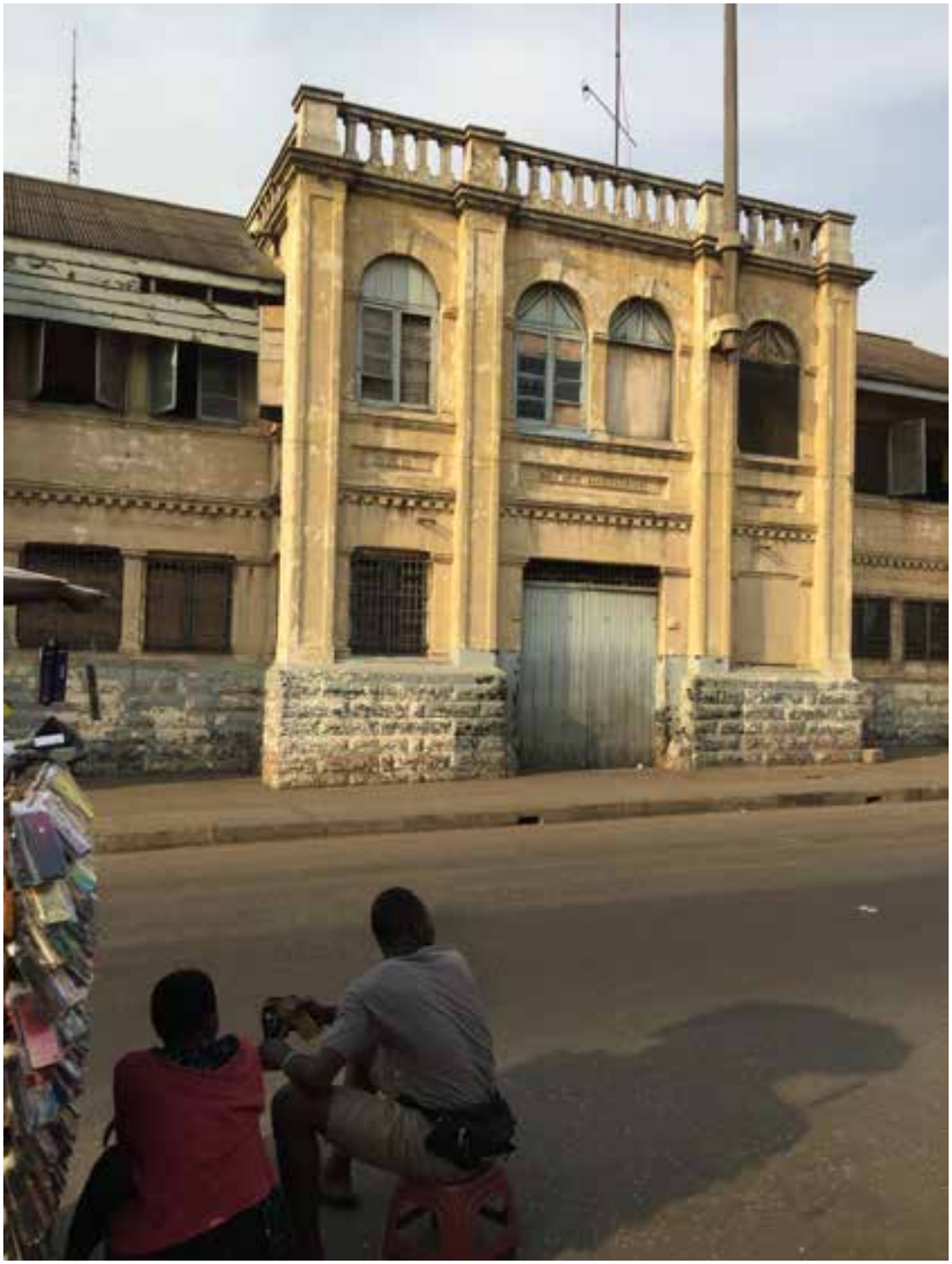
47 Accra Railway Station, 1900, Reproduced with kind permission of Unilever from an original in Unilever Archives , UAC/1/11/9/12/17

Educational establishments were founded, and included 'The Boys' School' (now Kinbu Senior High), and the Technical School (about which more later) with the intention of supplying a cohort of clerks and administrators, along with engineers, miners, and railwaymen respectively. At the end of this major street (now Kinbu Road) a site was purchased for the proposed police barracks just north of the Railway terminus (completed in 1900, with branch lines leading down to the jetties on the coast). The fortress-like barracks was positioned at a key location whereby officers could be deployed east to protect the Europeans, south to control James Town, or transported via train to other areas, if required. The individual European housing was also shown on the 1908 map, including around 30 bungalows set within large compounds. This housing was arranged around a central axis running perpendicular from the coast between Christiansborg and James Town.

48 Boys School (Kinbu), 2019, Author

The plan also identified a number of new bungalow plots positioned within this interstitial zone, to accommodate the growing official population on sites isolated from the African settlements.
The bungalow type responded extremely well to the climatic demands, but it was far from a neutral device. The photographs, particularly those showing the overall settlements, clearly reveal the desire to be set apart; with the bungalow forming a remote, defensive, stark container that barely touched the ground. Their presence must have been even more startling at the time. They held a strong physical authority whilst also standing as a reminder and countenance of everything that the British officials thought was wrong with the place, from the climate, people, townscape, fauna, soil, air – the entire place had to be kept remote. Germ theory only increased the paranoia, with the enemy being invisible to the naked eye.

The transnational design of the bungalow was also emblematic of British presence with the variations in design relaying further meaning, with scale mirroring prestige and higher rank.
The bungalows were very expensive – costing around £200,000 each at 2019 prices (excluding furniture) and requiring infrastructure and site clearance. It was a substantial sum in view of the lightweight construction; some were little more than a roofed timber frame on piloti.



49 Police Barracks, 2019, Author

These were costly solutions and such lavish expenditure to secure the health of a small number of British officers was clearly apparent to the African population, who naturally resented funds being frittered in this way.

Eager to improve the bungalow design and the comfort and health their European occupants the Colonial Secretary Victor Bruce wrote to all of the West African Governors in 1906 to hear their views.[98] The response from each Governor was, predictably, varied but charts the evolution of this housing type. Each Colony operated independently, with very little sharing of information or pooling of resource, ideas and purchasing power. It was only through the request of Bruce that these ideas and designs were exchanged and a collaborative spirit encouraged to extend the design development of this building type. The 2.4m (8ft.) piloti was considered by the Governor to be 'unnecessarily great' and a hangover from miasmic theory.[99] The design was largely standardised but further debates continued as to the orientation of the structures.[100]

The aim was to exploit the prevailing wind and its cooling breeze, whilst also avoiding the sun. The problem being that the wind blows from the South West, and this is also the direction that the sun strikes during the hottest part of the day. The debates offered a variety of views on how to balance ventilation with the impact of the azimuth. When the sun is directly above at midday the orientation of the bungalow is largely irrelevant, but as it strikes from a lower angle its rays penetrate underneath the roof's eaves and into the verandah causing considerable heat gain and glare.

The wind, whilst bringing some welcome relief to the heat could also be irritating if blowing through the building, prompting some to suggest the structure should be rotated to retain a partial breeze without being uncomfortable.

50 Accra Harbour, 1900, Courtesy of the Library & Archives Service, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, GB 0809 Macfie/03/04/03

51 Type 'A' Bungalow, Gold Coast. Photograph accompanying Annual Report, 1915, UK National Archives, CO 1069-40-11

Two types, 'A' and 'B', were developed with Type A sitting on a solid masonry base on top of which was the completely enclosed verandah and substantial hipped roof.[101] Type B was an even grander two-storey residence, eventually being split into two flats by the early 1920s. The development of the bungalow zone was considered even more significant in the events that were to follow, and disease (or imagined implications of it) were to strongly influence the further development of Accra.

Footnote

95 'Sanitary and Medical Report on the Gold Coast for the year ended 31st December 1894' (London, Waterlow and Sons, 1896), p.19.

96 Mary Hodgson 'The Siege of Kumassi', (Arthur Pearson, London, 1901), p.352.

97 Government of the Gold Coast, 'Reports on the Public Works Department 1895-1925-26', Annual Report for 1895, no 167/96, p.34-35.

98 Bruce was more well-known as the 9th Earl of Elgin.

99 'Design of Bungalows for Government Officials', The National Archives, CO 879/93/3, p.13.

100 'Medical and Sanitary Matters in Tropical Africa, The National Archives, CO 879/110/8.

101 Report on the Public Works Department for the Year 1920, Annual Departmental Reports relating to the Gold Coast and Togoland, 1843-1957, p.22. See also the photographs accompanying the 1915 PWD report held in The National Archives, CO 1069/40.

Plague and Dispossessed People

Plague broke out in January 1908, and the built environment was immediately targeted, if not blamed for the outbreak. Residents from the worst affected area were convinced by Chief Manche Kojo Ababio to vacate their homes and camp a few miles outside of the town west of the Korle Bu lagoon.
A cordon was erected to prevent anyone leaving Accra without proof of inoculation, and by taking these quick measures the outbreak was largely contained. However, it raised further health concerns and the notion of European segregation was rapidly sought by many.
The former Health Officer of Calcutta and editor of the Journal of Tropical Medicine, William John Richie Simpson was swiftly enlisted to write a report on the events.[102] He arrived in Accra on 2nd February 1908 having become the go-to consultant for all plague matters (having already been called out to Zanzibar, Mombassa, Cape Town and elsewhere) to dispense advice, often delivered with great hindsight, but his reports were useful in documenting the situation in which the endemics occurred. His approach was very much concerned with the physical environment rather than germ theory, and he took a particular interest in mapping and graphically representing disease outbreaks. Simpson tried not to operate at city-scale, instead he would address individual streets, courts and even houses. He aimed to track down the very source of the problem or disease, frequently documenting his findings through carefully surveyed plans and photographs. The Government reports stated how, 'special measures were taken with regard to congested areas and insanitary buildings in which cases of plague occurred. The evacuated portion of the town was first dealt with.'[103]
Simpson regretted that Ross's investigations had ' not progressed to any material extent',[104] and he took a more nuanced approach that looked beyond death rates and instead towards improvements 'in sickness and incapacity to do good work.'[105] Simpson praised the establishment of the 'European quarter' and thought the European traders might follow,

'but hitherto with very few exceptions they have not availed themselves of the benefit to be derived from a health point of view of having their residences apart from their offices and stores, which are usually situated in the midst of insanitary native huts.' [106] The debate had moved on from health towards that of comfort, 'with the exception of attacks of malaria' Simpson claimed, 'there are few things more depressing and irritating to the nervous system and destructive to health than having to reside in a hot and badly ventilated house. Broad verandahs, lofty ceilings, and careful planning of the rooms to secure good through ventilation are requisites for a comfortable house in the tropics.'[107]

It was a fairly anodyne review, reinforced with a proposed ten-year improvement plan where all new building was delivered according to a planned approach with water and sanitation installed prior to building. He recommended a European business quarter if the town was likely to become a trading centre, setting minimum building plots such as 15.2m x 22.8m (50 x 75 ft) for houses, with regulated streets and back lanes.
For the African settlements he saw the solution as very simple and pragmatic, namely that houses should be widely-spaced and properly constructed, pits (for swish) should be 457m (500 yards) away from the village and refuse burnt at 91m (100 yards) away and bush cleared for the same distance; latrines should be on the outskirts and one or two wells dug in the vicinity.
The solution, he declared, only required the agreement and amenability of the chiefs to be implemented. In practice however, the desire to be located at the centre of a settlement or market made those plots more desirable and placed increased pressure on land-value of certain streets. Simpson thought there was 'no economic reason for crowding together of houses and huts, and there is altogether a fictitious value given to houses and land'.[108]
Speculation and rapid development undoubtedly put pressure on land and resulted in the high densities he observed. Perhaps most importantly, he recommended personnel be employed purely to oversee sanitation and public health, and 'mosquito brigades' to remove bush, and oil any ponds or pools that could not be drained.[109]
The Government response was to establish the Accra Improvement Committee, appointed in June 1908 as part of the plague recovery plan. Whilst established as an advisory committee, it quickly assumed more

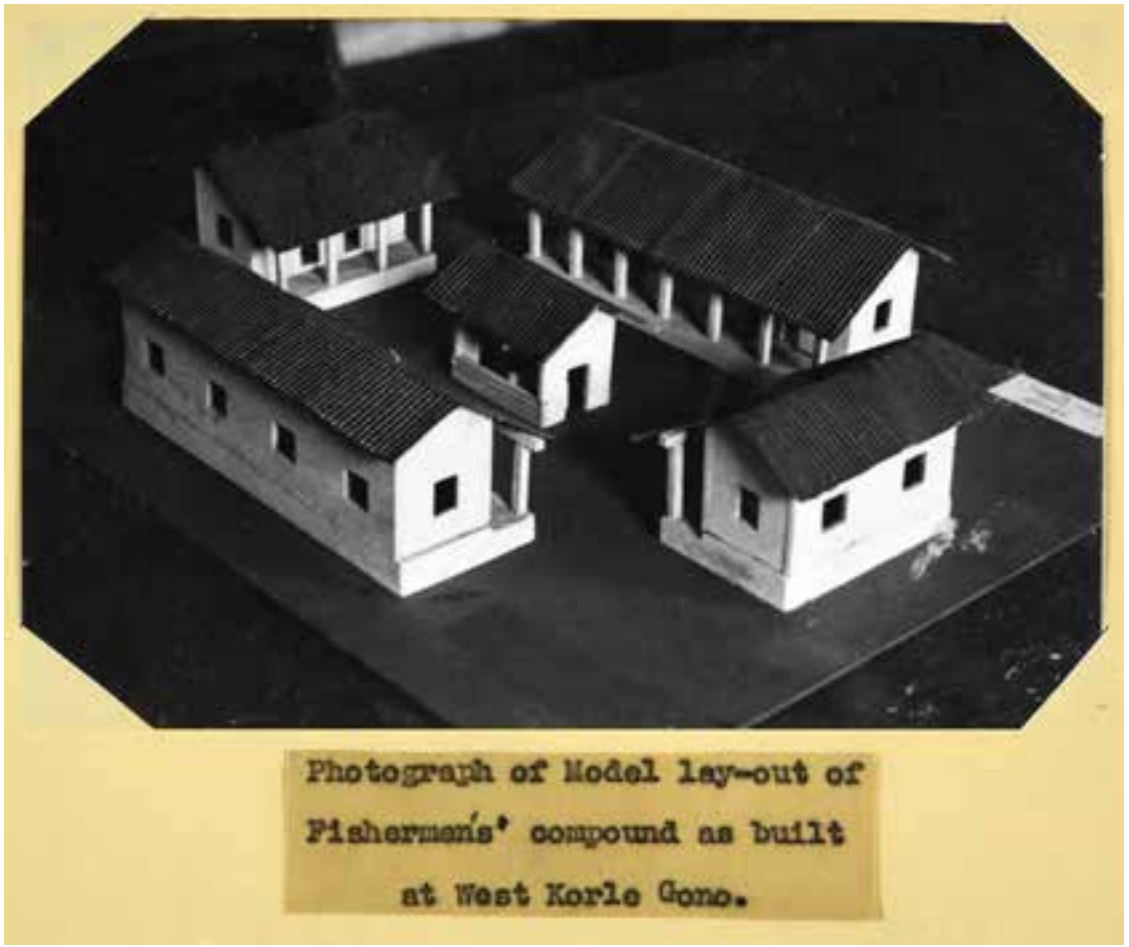
52 Adabraka Township, UK National Archives, CO 1069/40/46

executive authority and its 'demolition committee' began the process of street widening, slum removal and so on, under the direction of the Public Works, Principal Medical Officer, Commissioner of Police and Secretary for Native Affairs.[110] The committee also took responsibility for the resettlement projects of Adabraka, Korle Gono, Riponsville, and Oblogo Road settlement.[111] The terms of reference for the committee (which included merchants, W. H. Grey of Swanzy's, M. Crombie Steedman of Pickering & Berthoud, and lawyers, Thomas Hutton-Mills and Arthur Boi Quartey-Papafio) were to identify and advise on remodelling of congested and insanitary areas, to plan out the proposals, and recommend future development policy.[112]
The committee was appointed to advise on future plans and 'advise on the remodelling those portions of the town which form insanitary areas'.[113]
The remit was far too wide to be anything other than a broad brush, and a report was to be sent to the Governor advising on how the town might be arranged into various districts (business, residential etc.) with adequate streets and open spaces, improved drainage, efficient control over all building blocks and plots, density limits and most difficult of all,

'prescribing of the class of building to be erected in the several districts, having regard to other buildings in the vicinity, also of the height, width, and depth of the building, the size, lighting and ventilation of the rooms, the ventilation and air spaces around the building, the best means of rendering the building damp proof and rat proof, and the minimum space per occupant'.[114]

It was an ambitious quest, and a shrewd move by the Governor to create a committee comprised of his greatest critics (the European merchants and African elites), and clearly it was impossible to prescribe solutions applicable for all types of property (begging the question, were they being set up to fail?) Nevertheless it aimed to establish a comprehensive set of standards from which 'it is hoped there will arise a new Accra more worthy of the capital of the Gold Coast'.[115] The new committee was able to bring about a series of projects,

'Increased attention has been paid to questions of sanitation during the past year, and the establishment of a Sanitary Branch of the Medical Department, working in conjunction with the general scheme of Public Works, should, if the present degree of energy be maintained result in improvements on a scale unthought-of before the epidemic plague of 1908.'[116]



53 Korle Gono model of fisherman's compound, UK National Archives, CO 1069/46/28

The 'dispossessed' in Ussher town were moved north of Horse Road, to a new 20 acre settlement named Riponsville, whereas Adabraka was more of a mixed community of 'Accras, Hausas, Yorubas, and Fulanis.'[117] 'Dispossessed' people from James Town moved across the lagoon on a newly built causeway to Korle Gono on plots 28.6 x 20m, with six houses per block set between 12m wide roads and 3.6m wide service alleys. A scale model was produced to help promote the scheme.
The first structures were 'model houses' built for Government overseers constructed from materials supplied by the Government 'the cost being repaid by instalments'.[118]

The value of materials issued to any one person was not to exceed £50, with the residents providing the labour themselves and regular inspections before additional resources were released.[119]
It was considered an economical method for ensuring quality construction and space standards whilst making the housing affordable, 'the people took full advantage of the issue of materials, building a very much better class of house than they could have done had not the Government adopted this method of helping them...'[120]
The roads at Riponsville were constructed by prison labour and the demolition of existing buildings permitted under the Sanitary Improvements Vote.[121]
The demonstration houses sold quickly with terms set at ten years with six per cent interest. Adabraka proved less popular but demand increased as Accra continued to grow.[122]
In Korle-Gono the basic temporary dwellings erected after the plague were still being occupied in 1911, and the Town Improvement Committee insisted on their removal and replacement with proper buildings. Thatch roofs were not permitted and

54 'Decorated residence of the Jamestown Mantse, Nee Kojo Ababio IV, KMAC. 'UK National Archives, CO 1069/38/7

imported 'Eternit' tiles were to be installed. Mantse Kojo Ababio wrote to the Governor explaining that the residents,

'have no means of even putting up good sheds for themselves, finding themselves in such straits, would most humbly and respectfully beg Your Excellency to consider their pitiable condition.'[123]

The petition was considered and various solutions mooted, but the PWD considered, 'the simplest solution of the problem is for the Government to build houses and sell outright on completion'.[124] They did not see the purchase money being difficult to come by, as 'a great deal of money has been paid out in Accra for the compulsory acquisition of land and houses, and in addition to funds from this source, the custom of family contributions is still in force'.[125] The Sempe Stool sold 175 acres for £865 enabling the creation of Korle Gono and eventually the Korle Bu Hospital.[126]
The Mantse Kojo Ababio was given a £500 newly built house in the Alata Quarters of James Town by the Government in recognition of his services during the 1908 plague, and the house has been proudly maintained (and further decorated) since.[127]
Gifts, honours, and titles were all part of the Colonial method of encouraging compliance and maintaining the appearance of an equitable system of governance.
The Hausa settlements were also cleared and compensated in 1911, and the area around what is now Zongo Lane laid out. Despite these attempts at reform Yellow Fever broke out at the Basel Mission Factory. A number of properties were condemned and 563 isolated.
Swanzy's agent W. H. Grey became particularly troubled about Yellow Fever 'appearing' in Sekondi,

'I do not wish to appear as an alarmist, but after the Accra plague, and the condition the Government allowed Accra to get into, I think it is about high time some steps should be taken…for proper expenditure upon sanitary works at Sekondi'.[128]

His concern turned out to be prophetic and Yellow Fever emerged the following year. Whilst the mercantile community was continually lobbying and bemoaning the Government for increased investment in areas that concerned their business agenda, they were often acutely aware of the local conditions, and had the means to express their concerns at the highest levels.
They also never missed an opportunity to accuse and highlight contradictions in the Government's approach. For example, at Sekondi, Grey noted that although the Governor was unable to promise to fund the sanitary improvements, this funding required would be no more than if the railways and Government's own property was rated on the same basis as commercial property. James H. Batty, an agent for Millers (and later chairman of the Ashanti Goldfields Corporation) wrote to the Colonial Office offering to fill in the lagoon at Sekondi provided the Government agreed to rent the land afterwards, stressing that the recent plague outbreak cost the Colony £25,000, and had that money instead been spent on Accra and Sekondi they would by now be in an excellent sanitary state, instead, 'the money has been spent on stamping out the plague without anything having been done to permanently put these towns in proper sanitary order'.[129]
The Improvement Committee increasingly took a proactive role whereas the Accra Town Council seemed to flounder and struggled to match the ambitions many had for the town. W. H. Grey tabled at the Improvement Committee that the Town Council be disbanded, and the African unofficial members backed his motion. They had both sat on the Town Council and witnessed its proceedings and lack of leadership.[130] There had been four different presidents of the council in a 12 month period, no doubt a contributing factor to the slow sanitary reform. The Town Council was an attempt to offer representation to the Africans in exchange for the taxation it levied, but as the Improvement Committee noted, the Unofficial Members of the Accra Town Council had little or no influence upon the action of the Council, and the actual revenue and expenditure of the Council was determined by Government officials,

'the natives of the town stand to lose nothing…the present Town Council Ordinance cannot be truly called in practice "a measure of self-Government", and an act of the Government to make an end of the farce would be welcomed by all'.[131]

It was a harsh rebuke and by the standards of the time would have been considered an outrageous outburst.

55 Jamestown Mantse Residence, 2019, Author

Footnote

102 See Iain Jackson, 'Health, Hygiene and Sanitation in Colonial India', European Architectural History Network, 2014 Conference Proceedings, Turin, pp.1131-1140. (https://eahn.org/app/uploads/2015/07/EAHN2014proceedings.pdf)
103 HMSO, 'Colonial Reports: Gold Coast 1908 No.613', (London, HMSO, 1909), p.41.
104 William John Richie Simpson, 'Sanitary matters in various parts of West African colonies', (London, HMSO, 1909), p.13.
105 Ibid. p.13.
106 Ibid. p.13.
107 Ibid. p.13.
108 Ibid. p.18.
109 Ibid. p.18.
110 Acting Governor Bryan to the Secretary of State, 6th May 1912, 'Medical and sanitary matters in tropical Africa; further correspondence', The National Archives, CO 879/109/9, p.221.
111 Ibid, p.222.
112 Accra Improvement Committee Terms of Reference, 1912, 'Medical and sanitary matters in tropical Africa; further correspondence', The National Archives, CO 879/109/9, p.226.
113 William John Richie Simpson, 'Sanitary matters in various parts of West African colonies', (London, HMSO, 1909), p.41.
114 Ibid. p.42.
115 Ibid. p.42.
116 HMSO, 'Colonial Reports: Gold Coast 1909 No.654', (London, HMSO, 1910), p.32.
117 Acting Governor Bryan to the Secretary of State, 6th May 1912, 'Medical and sanitary matters in tropical Africa; further correspondence', The National Archives, CO 879/109/9, p138.
118 HMSO, 'Colonial Reports: Gold Coast 1910 No.688', (London, HMSO, 1911), p.40.
119 See Governor to Secretary of State 14th April 1910, 'Medical and Sanitary Matters in West Africa', The National Archives, CO 879/102/7, p.194.
120 Report on the Public Works Department for the Year 1912, Annual Departmental Reports relating to the Gold Coast and Togoland, 1843-1957, p.27.
121 HMSO, 'Colonial Reports: Gold Coast 1908 No.613', (London, HMSO, 1909), p.49.
122 Report on the Public Works Department for the Year 1915, Annual Departmental Reports relating to the Gold Coast and Togoland, 1843-1957, p.20.
123 Manche Kojo Ababio to the Governor, 6th March 1911, 'Medical and sanitary matters in tropical Africa; further correspondence', The National Archives, CO 879/108/6, p.34-35.
124 P. N. H. Jones, PWD Director, 10th June 1911, 'Medical and sanitary matters in tropical Africa; further correspondence', National Archives, CO 879/108/6, p.37.
125 Ibid, p.37.
126 Report on the Public Works Department for the Year 1916, Annual Departmental Reports relating to the Gold Coast and Togoland, 1843-1957, p.16.
127 Acting Governor Bryan to the Secretary of State, 6th May 1912, 'Medical and sanitary matters in tropical Africa; further correspondence', The National Archives, CO 879/109/9, p138.
128 W. H. Grey to Joint West African Committee, 27th October 1909, 'Medical and Sanitary Matters in West Africa', The National Archives, CO 879/102/7, p.53-54.
129 J. H. Batty to Colonial Office, 5th November 1909, 'Medical and Sanitary Matters in West Africa', The National Archives, CO 879/102/7, p.53.
130 Acting Governor Bryan to the Secretary of State, 6th May 1912, 'Medical and sanitary matters in tropical Africa; further correspondence', The National Archives, CO 879/109/9, p.248.
131 Accra Improvement Committee, 6th May 1912, 'Medical and sanitary matters in tropical Africa; further correspondence', The National Archives, CO 879/109/9, p.248.

Segregation and its Implications

The Yellow Fever outbreak resulted in yet another expert being drafted in by the Colonial Office to investigate. Rubert Boyce was commissioned having already undertaken similar investigations at British Honduras (1905) and written more widely about health in the West Indies.
His Gold Coast report was published in 1911 following his visit, and he concluded that many deaths previously noted as 'fevers' (remittent, bilious, pernicious, malignant malarias and so on) were likely to have been undiagnosed Yellow Fever.[132] There was a reluctance by the Chief Medical Officer to record the disease for fear of being 'alarmist'. The Stegomyia Calopus mosquito was the disease vector and bread more readily in small containers, tins and other rubbish associated with the growing towns and settlements. The rapid outbreak was also due to the increased number of 'unseasonsed' workers and visitors who had not gradually become exposed to the disease building up some resilience and immunity from it over an extended period. The sudden expansion of the towns and mining areas resulted in a both an increase in newcomers and the means by which the mosquitos could more readily breed and spread.
Boyce pressed for the 'segregation of the whites i.e. of the non-immunised' and the necessity for pipe-borne water supplies that would 'strike at the root of Stegomyia breeding' and eliminate the need to store water in jars, barrels and wells.[133]
A sub-committee reporting to the main Medical and Sanitary Committee for Tropical Africa also made similar suggestions as well as noting that the cost of 'improving' the towns and bringing them 'into a normal healthy state' would be initially expensive but within the means of the municipal purse, whereas other larger infrastructure projects such as 'water supply... disposing of sewage; town planning and surveying' and so on were beyond the resources of the towns and would require 'extraordinary' funding from a special commission or the Colonial Government.[134]
The move towards segregationist policies stemmed from the early malaria reports, and accelerated following the plague and Yellow Fever outbreaks.[135]
These attitudes were also bolstered by a shift in the attitudes towards mixed race relationships.
A 'circular' issued by Governor Rodger in 1907 forbade 'undesirable relations' between British officers and African women,[136] and Lord Crewe's circular from 1909 prohibiting 'concubinage' between Government officers and 'native' women.[137]
From the remote Whitehall offices of the Colonial Office, fear of vast disease eruptions was a major concern and they preferred a simple solution: move the European housing away from the African. But in practice it was bordering on ridiculous and impossible to implement with any meaningful conviction. Tentative dispatches were exchanged between West Africa and London, but several of the West African Governors rebuffed the proposal, and only at Freetown was this trialled in with a separate European 'Hill Station' connected to the town via a 'mountain railway'.[138] The European merchants wanted to remain within the main trading areas and their agents tended to live above the warehouses and factories. 'Liverpool merchants', claimed Ross, 'generally wished their agents to live near their offices in the town, for business reasons; and others thought it wicked for white men to segregate themselves from their brothers, being quite regardless of the fact that the former died so frequently in consequence of the proximity'.[139]
Even with Ross's extensive research he was still convinced that the Africans and their settlements were a major health problem.
Lagos Governor William MacGregor (who was a trained doctor) had implemented many of Ross's ideas and was strongly opposed to segregation because it did not address the source of the disease, and if Europeans moved out they would not, he argued, engage with African town sanitation with

56 Interior of Miller Brothers Agent Accommodation,
Reproduced with kind permission of Unilever from an original in Unilever Archives, GB1752.UAC/1/11/9/12/16

any conviction.[140] The Gambia's Governor, George Denton also refused to comply because it did not warrant the expense. These were pragmatic approaches, and the Governors had close relationships with African
traders, landlords and chiefs and didn't want to create unnecessary division, as MacGregor stated, he wanted no racial problem in Lagos. Despite this, the Principal Medial Officers by 1911 further extrapolated the segregation idea so that in 'all areas in West Africa set apart for the residence of Europeans there should be a circle, not less than a quarter of a mile across, within which neither natives nor Europeans should be allowed to settle'.[141] Segregation areas according to this decree were gradually set out in Kumasi, Dunkwa, Sekondi, Tarkwa, Axim, Cape Coast, Saltpond, Winnebah, Nsawam and the sanitary officer requested that no building permits were to be issued for European quarters in the 'native portions of the towns'.[142] The Sanitary Officer for Gold Coast exclaimed,

'My experience in West Africa has taught me that, apart from a certain type of Government official, more happily becoming extinct, the bitterest opponent of sanitation is the local merchant agent. He may live in a native town, but his quarters are usually palatial, whilst those occupied by his assistants are often such as, could the shareholders at home realise their condition, they would blush to pocket their dividends'[143]

The various complications such as domestic servants living in the same house or compound, personal relationships, business associates, and long histories of marriages and children, commute times, not to mention trading and labour arrangements were ignored by these blunt fancies.
Probably in light of the sanitation problems at Sekondi, Governor Matthew Nathan attempted to establish European districts and trading areas to impose some order onto the rapidly developing town, but when John Roger took over he frankly stated, 'the compulsory segregation of Europeans from natives is unknown in any part of the world, and I am certainly not prepared to advocate it on the Gold Coast'.[144]
It was again picked up by the subsequent Governor, James Thorburn, who couldn't quite comprehend the notion of drawing a circle on a map indiscriminate of the contours and arrangement of the settlement. His tone and language reflected the gravity,

'the position is a very serious one, and I need hardly say that it would be most repugnant to me to expropriate native landholders wholesale unless such a policy is declared to be imperatively necessary'.[145]

The African Association (a major trading firm) also found problems with accessing land at affordable prices and they hoped the Government would offer land 'on favourable terms so as to induce merchants to follow the [segregation] recommendations'.[146]
By 1913 it was being mooted that all European housing (site, orientation and construction details) would need to be approved and licenced by a Sanitary Officer. The problem with this approach, the Governor Hugh Clifford noted, was that 'an impasse would at once be reached' as so many of the bungalows (including the Governor's own residence) would likely be condemned as unfit for European occupation. Other spaces and facilities would also fall short of the ambition, including the hospital that was at that time shared (with separate wards) by both Africans and Europeans until 1916. The Governor warned that the Government would be advised to 'set its own house in order' prior to 'inspiring merchants and mine managers with increased respect for those principles of sanitation which are preached, but I regret to say, very imperfectly practised by Government'.
[147] In the quest to find suitable sites with sufficient isolation and room for potential expansion the PWD was 'reduced to a state of partial paralysis in its earnest desire to comply with the requirements of the sanitary authorities in this matter and its inability to do so'.[148] The Governor was further perplexed that the sanitary officers held the final say, becoming an 'autocracy, uncontrollable' and could even with the power to override his decisions on the matter.[149] The sanitary officers were working to the letter of the law rather than taking a more holistic view of the situation which was swayed not least by land value and basic practicalities.
Clifford was particularly outspoken on the matter, he personally located a suitable site for new bungalows north of the race track in Accra, but the European hospital which was currently under construction at that time fell foul of the new regulations. The police barracks (Kinbu Road) would also need a new site costing around £5000 just to purchase the land (£400,000 in 2019 terms, plus the loss of the previous site costs).[150] The health of European officials was almost becoming the primary goal of the entire venture funded 'lavishly' by African taxation and 'so selfish a policy that, viewed from the standpoint of the native taxpayers, it will not bear the test of examination'.[151] It is extraordinary to hear the Governor's writing in this matter on official correspondence. Clifford continued his extensive retort,

'Carried to its logical conclusion, the acceptance of this contention would entail the abandonment of many, if not all, of our West African colonies and possessions. It is clearly more conductive to the preservation of health to reside in Europe than to live in great discomfort on the Gold Coast...Even if complete segregation of European habitations on the Gold Coast could be effected at moderate cost, the Europeans dwelling in them would not thereby be rendered immune even from mosquito-borne disease.' [152]

He went on to explain that in the course of work it would be quite impossible for European officials to completely avoid Africans and thereby the risk of introducing malaria into the European enclaves would remain. Furthermore, merchants and missionaries desired to live in close proximity to their mines, factories and missions, and resented any taxation increases that would impact their customers spending power. He finally recommended that the policy be abandoned as 'extravagant and impractical'.[153]
The Secretary of State replied to Clifford's dispatch, referring him to a circular from 1st February 1907 that stated in the most curt of replies that European quarters should, in principle, be 'on high land and away from native buildings and huts'.[154] Clifford could not let the matter lie, and continued to rage,

'the taxpayers of the Colony are being asked to pay twice over for the advantages incidental to their country being administered by British officers – once by being invited to give these officers special terms as to pay, leave, passage money, and pensions in order to compensate them for special risks which service in the Gold Coast Colony involves, and again by expending large sums of money, and submitting to great personal inconvenience and

hardship in many cases, by being evicted from their villages , in order to secure these officers against these special risks...The native population of this Colony has shown admirable patience and self-control [however,] discontent is steadily growing, and that the heavy expenditure on the segregation of Europeans is strongly resented by the educated and articulate classes of natives...'[155]

This was one of the implications of segregation and the creation of 'healthy' European enclaves; homes would have to be destroyed, entire villages 'moved' and large tracts of prime, fertile land kept vacant to preserve the cordon. Despite these concerns and the pithy diatribe of the Governor, by 1913 a European segregation area for Officials was identified in Accra and slowly cleared.[156]
The debate shows the cleft between the Colonial Office and the Governors; a tussle that revealed the gap between political will and the practical implications on the ground.

Whilst certain Governors such as Nigeria's Frederick Luggard virulently enforced segregation, the same was not true elsewhere in West Africa at this time, and the wishes of the central Government were not endorsed by the colonies.
This is not to say that it was a harmonious egalitarian community, but it certainly was not abrupt physical partition. Writing in 1920 Simpson claimed that the object was 'not merely to protect the European from disease... but also to prevent conditions arising which are likely to be detrimental to the well-being and material progress of the native population'.[157]
Simpson argued that the African settlements should be 'planned as carefully as the European quarters, and guarded as closely from growing into insanitary areas'.[158] Whilst these views would have made him somewhat progressive at the time, his argument still rested on his belief in European paternalistic hegemony, with the various races on 'different planes of civilisation'.[159]
He set out further thoughts on segregation and town planning, stating that 'in west Africa there are two systems of segregation practised', recognising that in old towns, like those of the Gold Coast, it wasn't possible to enforce strict segregation policy for European traders whereas for new towns a diligent and strict planning policy was administered with a 'segregated European reservation area, divided into a business area and a residential area.'[160]

A test case arose in Accra over a proposed Wesleyan Mission boarding school on the High Street. It was a particularly noteworthy case revealing many of the contradictions and competing factions at play with regards to segregation. The site was deemed within the European segregation zone, but was also adjacent to a densely populated area of African dwellings and businesses. It was also a prestigious site and well positioned plot ideally suited for 'Business use'. The Mission intended to build a residential school for African children, as well as missionary accommodation, contravening the segregation idea, and also abetting cohabitation of African and European. Clifford put the case to the Secretary of State Louis Harcourt, including a number of letters from the sanitary and medical officers.[161]

'57 Horse Road showing Wesleyan no2 Chapel, 1880-1905, ©Trustees of the British Museum Af,A48.140 (approximate site of the current cathedral).'

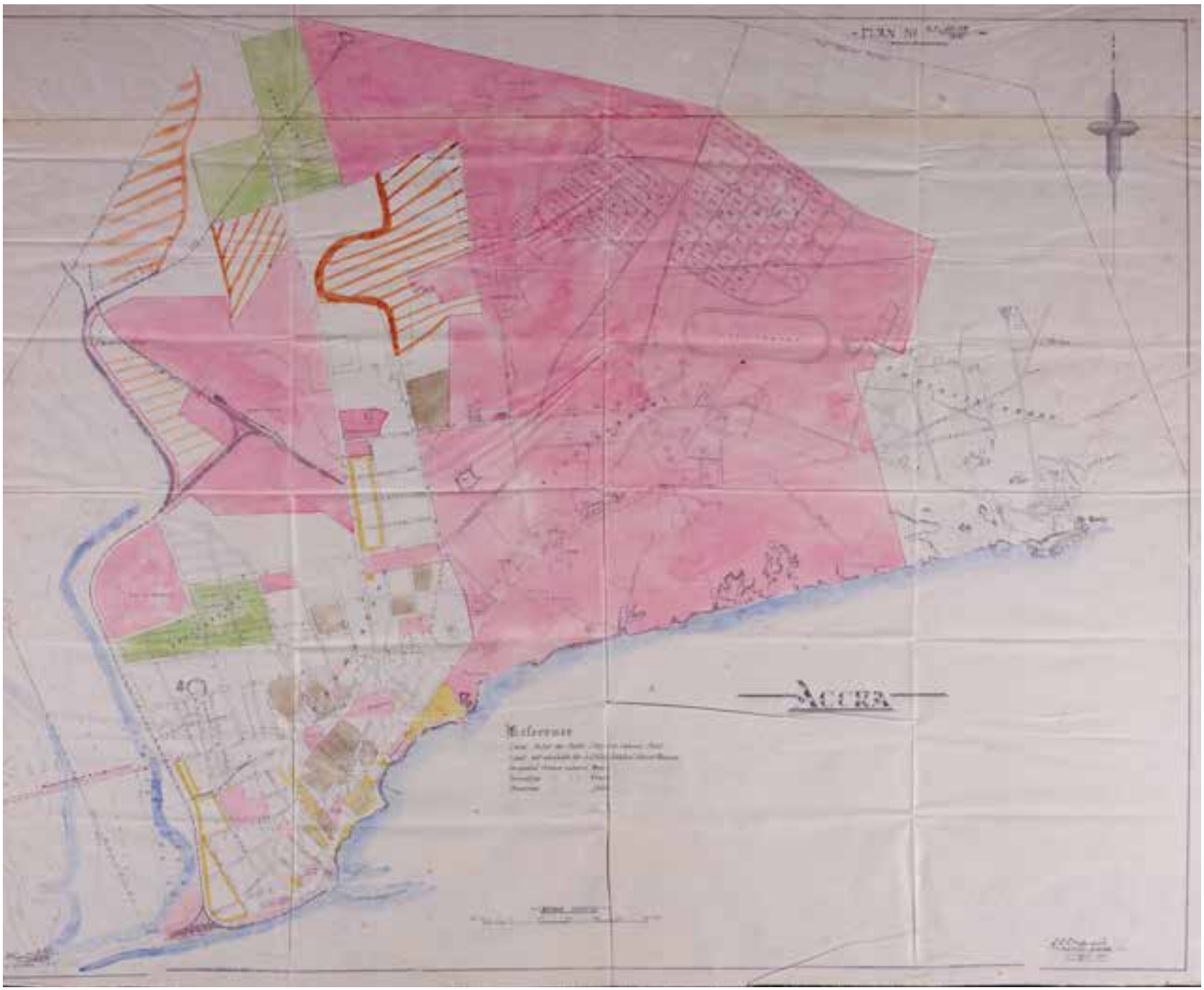
The Medical Officer for health wrote,

'either there is, or there is not, going to be segregation: if the former, why allow them to build; if the later why not?...The Sanitary Department are entirely against allowing buildings going up in the native town which are intended for Europeans'.[162]

This approach incensed the Governor who retorted, 'this would seem to presuppose that, if you are to have segregation at all, it is to be rigid and uncompromising, of universal application, and taking no account of exceptions. That has apparently been the view very generally adopted; but it is one which will have to be very considerably modified unless the work of Europeans in West Africa is to be foredoomed to failure in many instances.'[163]
The Principal Medical Officer agreed that if missionaries chose to work 'under dangerous hygiene conditions...we should not put obstacles in their way', but he objected on the grounds that they would be 'a danger to others' and should therefore work in places where it was safe to do so, such as north of Horse Road (presumably suggested for its proximity to the Methodist cathedral built in 1910, and the earlier site of Chapel no.2).[164]
However, the mission was adamant that it could not be removed away from its core outreach population and could not continue its mission unless cohabitation was permitted and the school built. Ignoring the details of the debate, Secretary of State Louis Harcourt, curtly replied, 'it would clearly not be proper to endeavour to compel unofficial Europeans to reside in the segregation area, but...control should be exercised over the plans of buildings which are about to be erected for their use'.[165]
The school does not appear to have been built.

Footnote

132 'Correspondence relating to the recent outbreak of Yellow Fever in West Africa', March 1911, London, HMSO cmd. 5581, p4. See also Rubert Boyce, 'Proof of the endemic origin of Yellow Fever in West Africa', British Medical Journal, 3 December 1910, p.1771.
133 'Correspondence relating to the recent outbreak of Yellow Fever in West Africa', March 1911, London, HMSO cmd. 5581, p7; and 'Preliminary report by Rubert Boyce to the Governor of the Gold Coast', 18 July 1910, The National Archives, CO 879/102/7, p.394.
134 'Report of the sub-committee appointed by the advisory medical and sanitary committee for tropical Africa, Medical and sanitary matters in tropical Africa', National Archives, CO 879/102/7, p.375.
135 'Sanitary and Medical Report on Gold Coast Colony for the year 1908', (London, Waterlow and Son, 1908).
136 Rodger to Elgin, 'Despatches Aug-Sept 1907', The National Archives, CO 96/459 number 31137. See also Carina E. Ray, 'Crossing the Colour Line: Race, Sex and the Contested Politics of Colonialism in Ghana (Ohio, Ohio University Press, 2015).
137 Crewe to Officer Administering Government of Gold Coast, 11 January 1909, PRAAD, ADM, 12/1/31.
138 See Stephen Frenkel and John Western, 'Pretext or Prophylaxis? Racial Segregation and Malarial Mosquitos in a British Tropical Colony: Sierra Leone', Annals of the Association of American Geographers, vol. 78, no. 2 (Jun. 1988), pp. 211-228
139 Ronald Ross 'Memoirs' (London, J. Murray, 1923). p449.
140 See Thomas Gale, 'Segregation in West Africa', Cahiers d études Africaines, vol 20, no4, Feb 1980, pp495-507, p497.
141 Sanitary and Medical Report on Gold Coast Colony for the year 1911, (London, Waterlow and Son, 1911), p63.
142 Ibid, p.63.
143 Ibid, p.63.
144 Roger to Colonial Office, 'Medical and sanitary matters in tropical Africa', The National Archives, 1910, CO 879/102.
145 John Thorburn to Secretary of State, 16th July 1912, 'Medical and sanitary matters in tropical Africa; further correspondence, The National Archives', CO 879/110/8, p.56.
146 W. Nicholl, African Association to Colonial Office, 5th September 1911, 'Medical and sanitary matters in tropical Africa; further correspondence', National Archives, CO 879/108/6, p.115.
147 Governor Hugh Clifford to the Secretary of State, 24 February 1913, 'Medical and sanitary matters in tropical Africa; further correspondence' The National Archives, CO 879/112/1, p.66.
148 Governor Hugh Clifford to the Secretary of State, 31 March 1913, 'Medical and sanitary matters in tropical Africa; further correspondence' The National Archives, CO 879/112/1, p.113.
149 'Medical and sanitary matters in tropical Africa; further correspondence' The National Archives, CO 879/113/6, p.25.
150 Governor Hugh Clifford to the Secretary of State, 31 March 1913, 'Medical and sanitary matters in tropical Africa; further correspondence' , The National Archives, CO 879/112/1, p.113.
151 Ibid, p.116.
152 Ibid, p.114.
153 Ibid, p.116. Clifford would go on to be Governor of Nigeria and became a strong advocate of segregation there – presumably because the new towns in the north made it easier and more practical to implement, see Clifford CO 897/120/6, p.9.
154 Secretary of State to Huge Clifford, 'Medical and Sanitary Matters in Tropical Africa', CO879/113/6, p.26 (quoting enclosure no.191, CO 879/102/7, p.265.)
155 Governor Hugh Clifford to the Secretary of State, 20 May 1913, 'Medical and Sanitary Matters in Tropical Africa', The National Archives, CO 879/112/1, p.239.
156 Report on the Public Works Department for the Year 1913, Annual Departmental Reports relating to the Gold Coast and Togoland, 1843-1957, p.34-35.
157 Simpson, Memorandum 11th August 1920, 'Medical and Sanitary Matters in Tropical Africa', National Archives, CO 879/119/13, p.509.
158 Ibid, p.509.
159 Ibid, p.509.
160 Ibid, p.509.
161 Frederick Luggard suggested to Harcourt that the new port town in Nigeria be named after him, and so Port Harcourt came into existence.
162 Medical Officer to President of Accra Town Council, 30th October 1912, 'Medical and sanitary matters in tropical Africa', The National Archives, CO 897/113/6, p.80.
163 Minute by the Governor (Sir Hugh Clifford), 1913, Enclosure 6 in no79, 'Medical and sanitary matters in tropical Africa', The National Archives, CO 897/113/6, p.81.
164 Minute by the Principal Medical Officer (Dr Hopkins), 16th July 1913, Enclosure 11 in no79, 'Medical and sanitary matters in tropical Africa', The National Archives, CO 897/113/6, p.81.
165 Secretary of State to the Governor, 16th September 1913, 'Medical and sanitary matters in tropical Africa', The National Archives, CO 897/113/6, p.175.



58 Map of Accra, Dispatches 1916, UK National Archives, CO 96/572

Colouring the Map Pink in Accra

A fresh map was prepared in response to the segregation agenda and attempted to show how the policy might be applied in Accra.[166] It was no longer just the individual premises that were identified as 'European' or 'African', but the land, streets, and open spaces were also now designated. The plan labels the territory spanning between Christiansborg Castle and James Town as simply 'taken for public purposes'. For the same reason a substantial tract was taken surrounding the railway station as well as additional smaller zones covering the 'native cemetery' and markets.

The only individual buildings depicted were the European institutions and bungalows - all of the other detail shown on the 1908 map was removed with just the roads and city blocks shown. 'Business' areas were highlighted to show the major trading zones and certain blocks were also in-filled and labelled simply as 'congested'. This was a euphemism for the most densely occupied African areas seen as most problematic for the colonial administration.

A quick comparison between the two layouts also reveals that a substantial African settlement located around the railway terminus on the 1908 plan had vanished, replaced instead with 'linear street layouts radiating from the now commercially attractive land abutting the train station. Two 'townships' are also shown located at the periphery of the town, and described elsewhere as being for 'dispossessed persons' (following slum demolition after the 1909 plague outbreak). The wealthier residents with larger properties were not subject to these blanket purchases and removals, but were offered market values should their properties or land be required. Mrs Hutton-Mills' property interfered with the plans for a more direct connection between the Post Office and the Station and was acquired for £500, as was Mr. Samuel David Pappoe's land near the police barracks on Kinbu Road.[167]

The number of bungalows in the pink zone continued to increase, arranged on a grid plan with different plot sizes and bungalow types to reflect the hierarchies and ranks of the officials.

Besides housing, other leisure facilities were introduced including a riffle range area, a club with tennis courts, and despite the climatic difficulties of keeping horses, a race track and polo ground.

As well as the more predictable institutions used to consolidate and represent state power such as the Law Courts, Secretariat, and Treasury, other builds were also deployed to reinforce the sense of legitimate governance coupled with an almost Foucauldian disciplining of the city and its occupants. The sick, the mad, and the delinquent were the first to be housed in the new civic institutions and facilities, their latent danger and limited economic value saw these people removed and isolated into hospital, prison or the asylum. These monuments to compliance and conformity relied on inducing fear in the population and ensuring that particular behaviours and attitudes prevailed. Equally, in the case of the prison, it generated an indispensable workforce used to complete the most repugnant task of latrine emptying and other lowly sanitary work. The hospital, located off the High Street between the European and Native Club was rudimentary and 'practically open to the general public, whether brought there by business or curiosity'.[168] It was not a place anyone wished to spend anytime in or around, serving as a glaring reminder of the frailty of life on the coast and its central location no doubt invoking fear of contamination. A new hospital exclusively for Europeans was planned and shown on the 1916 map, although the Governor was concerned that it was now too far away from the European residences and in 'dangerously close proximity to the lunatic asylum'.[169]

The current site of the hospital and health care facilities can still be found in this area, and the Asylum Down district is named after the location of the old 'lunatic asylum'.

Markets were also taken under 'public purpose' Government control, and all trading was to take place within a designated place (with subscription of a licence). This regulation ensured that goods, weights and measures were all legitimate and it was also a lucrative venture generating 35 per cent of Accra Town Council's income. Salaga Market was formally created in 1874 masking an extraordinary and dark history. It was previously the site of the largest slaving depots on the coast, named after the northern town of Salaga from where the enslaved were first consigned. The site continued to be used for 'legitimate' trade in the post-slavery era, and was developed into a series of large market halls and exchanges that were still in use until very recently.

59 Salaga Market, c1911, private collection

61 The Obelisk at Salaga Market with Governor Sir Matthew Nathan, c.1900,
Reproduced with kind permission of Unilever from an original in Unilever Archives, UAC/1/11/9/33/83

The market square was enlarged in 1911 and surrounding 15 blocks acquired and demolished to open up the site.[170]

By 1918 three large halls with subtle neo-classical mouldings and decoration were erected recognising the significance of this exchange in the city.[171]
The market is centred around a stone obelisk commemorating the 1900 Anglo-Asanti war.
Its Arabic inscriptions acknowledge the Hausas who fought with the British. It's a somewhat unexpected site for such a monument, but was clearly intended to serve as a strong (perhaps conceited) reminder to the northern traders, Asanti, and wider community, of recent events and the new power structures firmly in place.[172]
Whilst the obelisk may have reinforced the political agenda, it could not mask the fragility and vulnerability of the colonial charade. The entire enterprise rested on a small number of Europeans reinforced with mercenary muscle and yet the impression of solidity and permanence was rarely questioned.

60 Salaga Market, 1915 Courtesy of the Library & Archives Service,
London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, GB 0809 Macfie/03/04/03

One institution that did probe at the puppetry was the 'Native Clubhouse' (built in 1905), between the European Club and James Town (and curiously shown on postcards from the time). The presence of this building was a direct response to the exclusion of Africans from the European Club, but more than a mere meeting place for drinks at six o'clock, it was also a place to form a sense of shared identity and solidarity.
Through emulating certain practices of Europeans, the educated and elite Africans were also demonstrating cultural and professional parity, and the presence of such of club must have both unnerved the British imperialist as well as embarrassed the liberal.
In 1911 the PWD produced 'detailed drawings, specifications and quantities for 30 important buildings, estimated at £41,300...also working plans for smaller buildings and alterations...'[173] and developed a policy to produce standardised designs for building types such as police barracks, post offices, slaughter houses, and latrines. These structures were to be built in concrete and brick to reduce the cost of maintenance, and create a set lexicon of familiar types throughout the territory.[174]

62 The Obelisk at Salaga Market, 2019, Author

This approach enabled costs and materials to be properly estimated and ensured certain standards were met, and from a programmatic perspective clerks and administrators could be readily deployed where needed, using established systems regardless of their location. Design and engineering time was also reduced, and expertise and efficiency increased in the construction and contractor gangs to reduce construction time and minimise waste.
By 1913 a windmill had been built to pump seawater into a large tank at Salaga Market that flushed the town's main drain periodically back into the sea.
It was a major innovation that coincided with the construction of the Accra and Sekondi water works **(on 2nd July 1917 Accra public water supply was officially turned on).**[175] Prior to this the Colony had self-funded all projects through its own income, but the large and costly projects of water supply, sewers and harbours forced the Gold Coast to borrow money for the first time to fund its infrastructure and utilities.

63 Salaga Market, 2018, Author

Footnotes

166 Surveyors and Cartographers were employed from 1911 working within a 'Topographical Branch' of the PWD. HMSO, 'Colonial Reports: Gold Coast 1911 No.725', (London, HMSO, 1912), p.42.

167 Report on the Public Works Department for the Year 1917, Annual Departmental Reports relating to the Gold Coast and Togoland, 1843-1957, p .17. These two families were of the most affluent and influential African residents of Accra, see M. R. Doortmont, 'Pen-Pictures of Modern Africans and African Celebrities by Charles Francis Hutchison : A Collective Biography of Elite Society in the Gold Coast Colony', (2014 reprint, Brill). They also feature heavily in John Parker's 'Making the Town: Ga State and Society in Early Colonial Accra' (Oxford, James Currey, 2000).

168 Report on the Public Works Department for the Year 1918, Annual Departmental Reports relating to the Gold Coast and Togoland, 1843-1957, p.8.

169 Asylum Down district of Accra was named after the location of this first Asylum, built in 1906. Some of the Asylum's cells were subsequently sound proofed to avoid 'disturbance of residents in the locality'. Report on the Public Works Department for the Year 1918, Annual Departmental Reports relating to the Gold Coast and Togoland, 1843-1957, p.8.

170 Edward Hall, Sanitary Engineer Report, 1st July 1911, 'Medical and sanitary matters in tropical Africa; further correspondence', The National Archives, CO 879/109/9, p.240.

171 Report on the Public Works Department for the Year 1918, Annual Departmental Reports relating to the Gold Coast and Togoland, 1843-1957, p.11.

172 See Ato Quayson, 'Oxford Street, Accra: City Life and the Itineraries of Transnationalism' (Durham, Duke University Press, 2014), p.74-75.

173 Report on the Public Works Department for the Year 1911, Annual Departmental Reports relating to the Gold Coast and Togoland, 1843-1957, p.4.

174 Report on the Public Works Department for the Year 1911, Annual Departmental Reports relating to the Gold Coast and Togoland, 1843-1957, p.5.

175 Report on the Public Works Department for the Year 1917, Annual Departmental Reports relating to the Gold Coast and Togoland, 1843-1957, p.23. It was also commemorated in a monument located next to the James Town lighthouse.

64 Windmill at Salaga Market used to pump sea water to flush the main drain, UK National Archives, CO 1069-40-24

Guggisberg: Education, Health and Trade

'A social revolution is taking place among the peoples of the Gold Coast... the material conditions of life of large numbers of the indigenous population are undergoing a great change owing to the sudden acquisition of wealth by the inhabitants of the coca-producing districts, which now cover a large area in the Colony and in Ashanti....
Given the guidance of a wise and sympathetic central Government, the force of their racial character and the soundness and shrewdness of their political instincts qualify them to work out their own social and political salvation'.[176]
This was quite a statement to make, and an early acknowledgement of what the more progressive liberal faction of the British regime was thinking.
The statement was also made during the conflict of World War One, and was a flattering attempt at boosting morale with the promises of tomorrow.
The War saw substantial loss of both African and European life, with many Gold Coasters fighting in Uganda and throughout East Africa. The West African coast however remained largely unscathed, and Gold Coast had managed to accrue considerable reserves during the conflict as spending virtually ceased whilst income continued.
Most of the troops had returned to Gold Coast by 1917, and many were retained in the forces prompting the rapid construction of camps around Kumasi and Accra. Very few other projects were delivered (other than remedial work on the docks and harbour walls) as labour and materials remained scarce.
The armistice however prompted a massive boom, and the Colony was particularly well placed to deploy the funds it had continued to amass during the hostilities.[177]
Gordon Guggisberg first encountered West Africa as a Royal Engineer surveyor. He spent an extended period of time in the region and compared with most European officials had an unrivalled knowledge of its terrain and towns.[178] He became Director of Surveys and began a systematic and thorough mapping campaign, and although somewhat despised by his predecessor Hugh Clifford (probably for his entry into Administration at such a late stage from the Royal Engineers and not being one of the 'heaven sent' ruling classes), he certainly benefited from Clifford's thrift and resourcefulness.
A revenue surplus of over £1.6m had been accrued. The economic boom, it seemed, was stemmed only by the limitations of transportation and shipping.
Guggisberg took over the Colony at its peak and he quickly began a process of administration that viewed civil engineering, infrastructure and construction as the main vectors for 'progress'. This was coupled with his professed belief in 'native administration' and according to the claims of one biographer 'an obsessional belief in the potentialities of the people whom he governed...'.[179]
Guggisberg was certainly held in high regard as his graveside memorial, erected by the Paramount Chiefs in Bexhill-on-sea testifies. He was a 'successful' Governor in that regard, able to keep both Colonial Office and the colonised content. Perhaps the most shrewd method of colonialism was to present the impression of shared control and vested ownership, thereby ensuring peace and compliance, whilst simultaneously accruing a tighter, imperceptible control and fiscal advantage.
Guggisberg set about delivering three major interlinked projects that would go on to intensely mould the Colony's development and shape its future ambitions – these centred around education (Achimota School), healthcare (Korle Bu Hospital) and trade (Takoradi town and Docks). It was to be the largest expenditure the country had seen, and for many, it was a reckless emptying of the countries treasury. Guggisberg was highly gifted at delivering a strong, sometimes contested message in seductive, if overly simplistic terms,
'For progress we must have Education: for Education we must have bigger revenue. To get a bigger revenue we must have a bigger Trade, and to get a bigger Trade we must have more agriculture and far better systems of Transportation than at present exist'[180]

It's a compelling statement, and clearly showed the broader ambition of 'progress' through infrastructure and 'development'. There was certainly a humanitarian and benevolent (if paternalistic) cause to Guggisberg's regime; he believed his rational path would prosper the country, but equally his approach established a sophisticated strategy for future decades of trade and control. It would enable a system that minimised extensive (and expensive)

65 Korle Bu Hospital, 2018, Author

67 Pathology and Dental Department, Korle Bu, c.1956, private collection

European presence whilst still ensuring the imperial framework remained intact.
The reliance on imported European clerks, technicians and administrators could be eased if there was training and education provided to Africans. Furthermore, a more controlled and organised harbour system would eliminate lost tax revenue.
Upon being appointed Guggisberg submitted his report and spending plan to the Gold Coast even before departing from the UK. His decision to spend £1.6m on the docks alone provoked concern by both the European merchants and the African members of the Legislative Council. Nana Ofori Ataa, E.J.P. Brown and C. J. Bannerman eventually agreed (when given the engineers' report) that the port was not only necessary for expansion, but even to maintain current trade levels.[181]
The budgets explicitly reveal the shifts in scale, with the 1919 Extraordinary Public works budget of £22,000, increased to £400,000 by 1920.
New appointments were sanctioned but the Crown Agents found it difficult to recruit in the UK, and the PWD report noted that only 40 per cent of the European staff had any previous 'tropical experience' with around '20 per cent as unsuitable as regards health, conduct, or physique'.[182] The shortage of labour and skilled workers coupled with increases in the price of materials doubled the construction costs.
Despite this inflation, by 1920 Thomas and Edge building contractors had started work on the new 'Native Hospital' (at Korle Bu), with additional hospitals built at Koforidua and Winnebah.[183] The Korle Bu hospital, designed by PWD architect 'Mr. Hedges' contained administrative and nursing residential quarters as well as electric lighting and lifts, two operating theatres and a steam-disinfector laundry making it 'the best equipped and up-to-date institution of its kind on the West Coast'.[184]
Arranged around a series of courtyards with open corridors and expansive views of the sea it was beginning to address the urgent need for improved health provision and was a serious attempt at providing high quality care.[185]
This was the first priority for Guggisberg as disease stricken and unhealthy people would not be receptive to education, but more importantly, a larger, fitter population would assist labour supply and increase the potential for economic growth.

66 PWD Stores, 2018, author

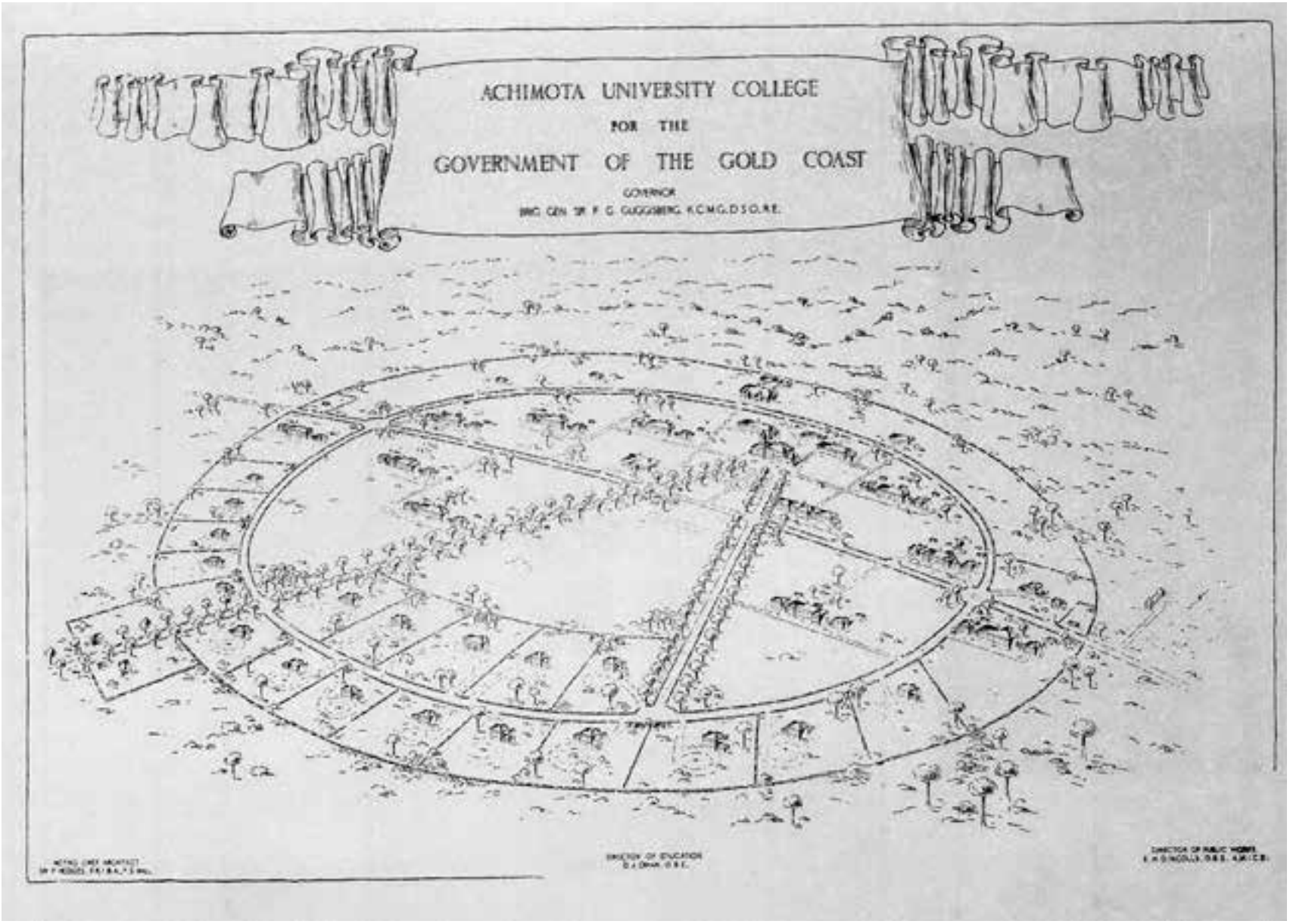
68 Akropong Presbyterian Teacher Training, The National Archives, INF10/121

70 Achimota School, 2019, Author

The hospital was substantially expanded in the 1950-60s with designs by Kenneth Scott, an abrupt and tough block (only rivalled in the brutalist stakes by Gerlach and Gillies-Reyburn's extension to Effia Nkwanta hospital near Sekondi, 1965).[186]
The rapid increase in construction projects prompted new workshops for Accra's PWD (completed in 1924) and an electricity supply was supplied beyond Korle Bu and into Accra, along with the continuing extensions of the water mains and treatment facilities. A provisional survey was conducted on the Kwahu plateau to investigate the potential of hydro-electricity production for the Bauxite Concession.[187]
During World War One the German Bremen and Basel Missionaries were expelled from the Colony, with their schools and seminaries taken over by the Education Department.[188] The Missionaries were not just involved in the construction of churches and mission halls, they funded their activities through substantial businesses.

69 Achimota School, 2019, Author

The Gold Coast Legislative Council voted to pass all of their assets and buildings onto a British Missionary Society, who could continue the work of the Mission and ensure all proceeds were spent on furthering missionary and educational work in the Colony and Asanti.[189]
The extensive network of schools would continue to be developed by the various British and Irish missionary societies. Scottish missionaries took over the chapel and teacher training college at Akropong, but Guggisberg also wanted a new exclusive school in Accra to educate its future leaders, and also lessen the desire to send students to the UK, or Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone.
The type of education, the instructors, and the physical environment, were of course to be modelled on British notions, and Walter Frederick Hedges design for Achimota School was remote and haughtily isolated from the distractions of the town.[190]
The school was built to embody a 'direct architectural symbolism and association with the Colonial administration' and makes a bold impression with its Château style clock tower that breaks up the stiff, symmetrical composition, and recalls the dreaming spires of European colleges.[191]
Guggisberg Avenue forms a central axis leading to the tower and intersecting a drive lined with staff villas that circumnavigates the campus.



71 Perspective drawing of Achimota School, c. 1920s, private collection

Ornamentation on the main building is restricted to the entablature above the double-height entrance portal, which leads into the hall and double-banked staircase. All architectural flourishes are carefully applied to these ceremonial portions of the school, with the rest taking a more standard PWD approach of corridor-loggia arrangement, albeit at an exaggerated scale and very carefully detailed.
The residences and other faculty buildings are positioned within the circular drive and there have been a series of new additions and extensions made over the years (such as a hall designed by Richard Nickson in 1954, and a gymnasium sponsored by chocolatiers, Cadbury Brothers in 1957, to commemorate the Independence).

Footnotes

176 HMSO, 'Colonial Reports: Gold Coast 1916 No.948', (London, HMSO, 1918), p.6.
177 HMSO, 'Colonial Reports: Gold Coast 1916 No.948', (London, HMSO, 1918), p.24.
178 See R. E. Wraith, 'Guggisberg' (London, Oxford University Press, 1967) for full descriptions of the surveys, and Frederick Gordon Guggisberg, 'Handbook of the Southern Nigeria Survey and text book of topographical surveying in tropical Africa' (Edinburgh, W and A K Johnston, 1911).
179 See R. E. Wraith, 'Guggisberg' (London, Oxford University Press, 1967), p.73.
180 Gordon Guggisberg, 1921, quoted in David Meredith, 'The construction of Takoradi Harbour in the Gold Coast 1919-1930' Transafrican Journal of History, 1 January 1976, 5, 1.
181 See Gold Coast Sessional Paper 8, (Accra, Government Press) 1920-21.
182 Report on the Public Works Department for the Year 1920, Annual Departmental Reports relating to the Gold Coast and Togoland, 1843-1957, p.1.
183 Report on the Public Works Department for the Year 1921, Annual Departmental Reports relating to the Gold Coast and Togoland, 1843-1957, Appendix 1.
184 Report on the Public Works Department for the Year 1922-23, Annual Departmental Reports relating to the Gold Coast and Togoland, 1843-1957, p.32.
185 Celebration Committee, 'Korle Bu Hospital 1923-1973: Golden Jubilee Souvenir', (Accra, 1973).
186 Extensions to Effia Nkwanta Hospital, Sekondi, Ghana; Architects: Gerlach & Gillies Reyburn, West African Builder & Architect, May-June 1965, p.48-52. For Korle Bu see, Interbuild, March 1965, pp.10-14.
187 Report on the Public Works Department for the Year 1922-23, Annual Departmental Reports relating to the Gold Coast and Togoland, 1843-1957, p.31.
188 HMSO, 'Colonial Reports: Gold Coast 1917 No.998', (London, HMSO, 1919), p35. Whilst the Basel Mission was Swiss, it had a large number of German employees and operatives, and was there deemed a potential risk by the British.
189 'The Basel Mission Bill, West Africa', (1st March 1919), p.84.
190 Hedges also designed the Harbour Office at the new town of Takoradi, St. Augustine's College Chapel in Kumasi in 1926, and moved on to Malaysia and Singapore where he designed the Sultan of Perak's Palace, and then to Fiji where he designed the Suva government buildings.
191 See Ola Uduku, 'Learning Spaces in Africa: Critical Histories to 21st Century Challenges and Change' (London, Routledge, 2018).

Accra in the 1920s

The post World War One boom and profits from cocoa saw considerable investment in new buildings and businesses, as well as a growing middle class demanding the latest products, fashions and entertainment from Europe and America. W. Bartholomew and Co. Cinematograph Palace on Station Road was well placed to capitalise on this social shift. Built in 1913 and known as the 'Merry Villas' it could accommodate 1000 customers and was equipped with its own electricity generator. Bartholomew (eventually merged with John Holt) also traded in vehicle spares, tyres, and mechanical repairs, as well as contracting to the PWD and of course trading in cocoa.
The chapel hall scale and form of the cinema was offset by the exaggerated three entrance archways on the end gable and steeply sloped châteauesque roofs on the flanks.

73 Merry Villas, Station Road, 2019, Author

72 Merry Villas Cinema, Bartholomew, Station Road, 1925,
Reproduced with kind permission of Unilever from an original in Unilever Archives, UAC/1/11/9/36/11

Amongst the warehouses, mechanics workshops and factories, the plastered flourishes and playful external décor gave a quixotic and dreamy allure. It was a temple devoted to the moving image and its congregation was attracted by the malleable seat-pricing structure and exotic foreign titles.
It was also a form of mass media, and like the cinema halls in the UK showed newsreels prior to the main feature, often with overt imperial propaganda. Several halls and meeting places opened, many were simply an open compound with a screen at one end for evening viewings, but the entrance portal and ticket hall took a playful, exaggerated form, such as the Opera (Lebanese owned), Rex (Government owned) cinemas and 'orientalist' zest of Wato nightclub.[192] By 1920 The Palladium had also opened on the corner of Hansen and Horse Road, again with refined, if eclectic, architectural references drawing from muted classical motifs and Dutch gables. It was a theatre as well as a cinema, built and owned by Alfred J. Ocansey a trader and owner of Ocansey's stores on Pagan Road.[193]
The iconic Palladium sign gave not only a touch of glamour but also gave much needed light to the unlit streets of Accra ('inhabitants when they go out at night, carry lanterns with which to find their way in the dark streets') 150 street lamps were finally installed in Accra in 1924.[194]

75 The Wato Nightclub, 2018, Author

One of the most prolific architects and contractors in the 1920s was Thompson, Moir and Galloway.
They built eight bungalows and 'transit quarters' in Accra in 1921, the transit quarters were converted into law courts in 1922, it being a large and imposing structure with bold Doric colonnade.
The former courts were then occupied by the medical department and their former quarters converted into a rest house.[195] Thompson, Moir and Galloway supplied pragmatic and buildable solutions, delivering maximum floor area with minimal materials.
William Galloway was a prominent Freemason and no doubt this helped his business transactions and the large number of commissions he obtained in the rapidly developing town. The Freemasonry Hall on Liberia Road is named after him. As architects they would have been viewed disparagingly by the Profession, operating as timber merchants, contractors, and offering a 'design and build' service was certainly contrary to professional codes of the time.

74 Holt Bartholomew Stores and Mechanical Workshops, 2018, Author

The type of work pursued was also not 'high' architecture, but somewhat of a more robust, pragmatic and everyday nature. There was often subtle classical motifs (hints of a pediment) but these pretensions were kept to a minimum, as seen on the refined new trading premises of John Walkden and Co. on the corner of Bannerman Road and High Street.[196]
The ground floor contained the stores and retail area the façade plastered to give the illusion of ashlar blocks, and the residences and offices were above shaded by the loggia. The new premises were likely built after Levers acquisition of the firm in 1917 replacing the much older premises (now demolished and replaced with a gas station).[197] Several Walkden yards and stores still survive running up Bannerman Road, built incrementally as trade expanded.
Walkden's was formed in Manchester in 1859. Besides Galloway, Philip Spicer also ran an architectural firm alongside various other trading ventures, known as Frame's Agency, and he served as a 'concrete specialist' on the Accra waterworks.[198]
It was not until 1922 that a Chief Architect was employed at the PWD. Many of the old trading firms either merged or were bought out by others in the first decades of the 20th Century. Most were eventually absorbed into the United Africa Company (that had first formed in 1879) after it became a limited company in 1929.

76 The Palladium, 2019 Author

Lever had complete control of UAC from 1932.
F & A Swanzy had been trading since at least 1807 (possibly earlier), and their 'No 1 retail store' in Accra was on the corner of Bannerman and High Street, built after the 1895 fire (and now substantially altered) and with a uninterrupted view of the harbour below. By 1904 they had fallen into financial difficulty were bought by Miller Brothers of Liverpool (founded in 1859), although both firms continued to trade independently. A further amalgamation of two other businesses saw the creation of the African and Eastern Trade Corporation, and they opened a major department store known as Kingsway on the High Street (building dates from 1914). The curved colonnade at ground floor level maximised the vast window display presenting a full array of goods to attract passers-by.
The building presented a major move in retail, from the piled-high warehouses with goods behind the counter, to that of a browsing emporium with aspirational products carefully presented in display cabinets. Tarquah House was built next door in 1915 and followed a similar approach, whilst also retaining large warehouses and wholesale operation.

77 Walkden and Co, Reproduced with kind permission of Unilever from an original in Unilever Archives, UAC/1/11/9/60/23

'Tarquah House, with its modern frontage and its extensive plate-glass windows artistically dressed with assortments of the firm's high-class supplied, would not be out of place in any fashionable shipping district oversea. But the architectural features or the exhibitory fixtures of any business place are of minor importance to every community in comparison with the intrinsic character of the things that may there be obtained....'[199]

Again, a colonnade shaded the large openings and glazing below, and whilst appearing almost domestic in scale, it is a deceptively spacious structure of double height proportions and built to a very high standard with tropical timbers. These two department stores were ideally positioned to serve the large number of bank employees working in the vicinity, and to accommodate the retail whims and fashions of growing numbers of mine and plantation owners. Tarquah Trading Co. was also the first store to employ female shop assistants in Accra (and Lagos). Whilst the retail boom reflected the prosperity of Accra, inflation and rising costs soon followed. The early 1920s saw construction costs spiral and the imported materials were becoming extremely expensive, not least as there was an effective cartel operated by the big shipping companies. The impact on construction was particularly severe as the Government insisted on a particular brand of cement being used (which was also eventually purchased by Alfred Jones and priced at a premium), having a major impact on all construction projects.

The Government attempted to explain the high construction costs as being due to '...the arrears of repairs and maintenance which could not be undertaken during the War, the expansion of all Government Departments, the increased mileage of roads to be maintained, and the very large amounts necessary or the maintenance and upkeep of the Mechanical Transport Service.'[200]

78 Walkden and Co, 2019, Author

79 Old Walkden, Reproduced with kind permission of Unilever from an original in Unilever Archives , UAC/1/11/9/60/9

80 Walkden Warehouses, Reproduced with kind permission of Unilever from an original in Unilever Archives , UAC/1/11/9/60/25

81 Walkden Warehouses, 2019, Author

82 F & A Swanzy Reproduced with kind permission of Unilever from an original in Unilever Archives , UAC/1/11/9/62/154

83 F & A Swanzy, 2019, Author

84 Kingsway, Reproduced with kind permission of Unilever from an original in Unilever Archives, UAC/1/11/9/60/2

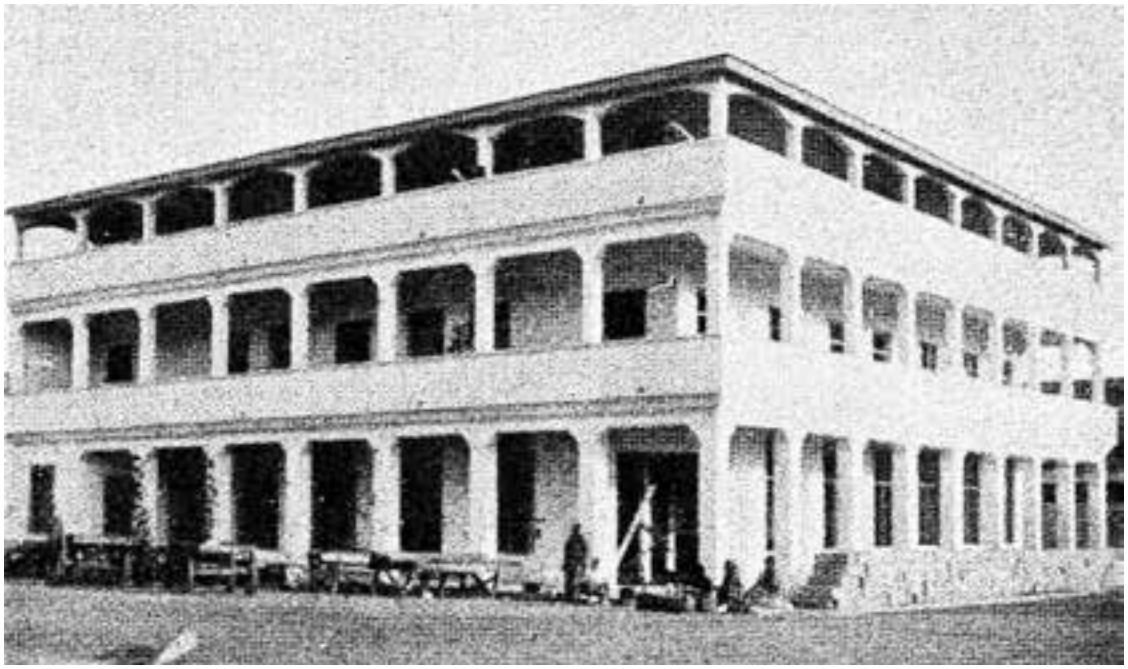
85 Kingsway, 2019, Author

86 Tarquah House, from Red Book of West Africa

87 Tarquah House, view from first floor overlooking future site of Kingsway, Reproduced with kind permission of Unilever from an original in Unilever Archives, UAC/1/11/9/62/183

88 Tarquah House, 2019, Author

89 Tarquah House view from first floor looking towards Kingsway, 2019, Author



'90 Werner Stores, The Red Book of West Africa, 1920'

91 Werner Stores, Kwame Nkrumah Avenue, 2019, Author

This must have certainly been a factor, but wages were not keeping up with inflation and developers were faced with extraordinarily expensive build costs. Building Artisans striked for two months in 1921, further delaying projects and clearly revealing signs of animosity and discontent.[201]
There were some attempts to use local materials and skills to reduce the need for imported products with the intention of crafting a regional approach and responding to calls made 15 years earlier for construction to 'follow local lines'. It became an unofficial policy of procuring local materials and in the following years bungalows were built in the locally burnt brick and shingle.
The Technical School (located on the site of the current Accra Technical University on Barnes Road) built a bungalow for the Education Department in Accra as 'live training project'. The use of 'local knowledge' and labour began to be used in more of a celebratory, confident manner and the PWD started to recruit African students to be trained in-house at Architecture, Quantity Surveying, Structural, and Mechanical engineering drafting, with the aim reducing the number of European staff in the future.[202] Some of the first cohort of African student architectural draftsmen cohort included R. T. Hyde, J. A. Aryeetey, W. J. Randolph, B. C. Solomon, and R. T. Dodoo.[203] They would go on to establish the 'Gold Coast Architectural Society' in 1935.[204] The PWD annual report reported that, 'There has been a steady improvement in design and construction, and it is gratifying to note that the modern designs are in many cases being prepared by African draughtsmen'.[205]
Despite the expense of imported materials, discontented workers, and a burgeoning set of designers, a quick saunter through James Town reveals row after row of large villas, factories, and trading stores built from this period. Whilst Kingsway and Tarquah may have procured the best in construction and catered in luxury goods, most stores and factories took a simpler approach. The most common form was a colonnade running along the front of the building that sheltered large doorways behind. These could then be opened up to reveal the entire ground floor to the street.

92 G.B. Ollivant, 2019, Author

The upper floors were usually offices and residences. Very few of the structures from the 1910s-1920s ventured beyond two-stories with the exception of C. H. Werner & co. (1919) on Station Road who added an additional floor for wholesale purposes and utilised the flat roof for cocoa drying.
Two of the largest premises were built by Mancunian traders, G. B. Ollivant (established by George Bent Ollivant in 1858), and Paterson Zochonis. Ollivant, initially imported cotton goods from Manchester and had stores throughout West Africa.

93 Paterson Zochonis, 2019, Author

94 Pickering and Berthoud, Reproduced with kind permission of Unilever from an original in Unilever Archives , UAC/1/11/9/60/7

95 J. J. Fischer , Reproduced with kind permission of Unilever from an original in Unilever Archives , UAC/1/11/9/36/7

96 Charles Lane House, As shown in
The Red Book of West Africa, 1920.

97 Charles Lane House, 2019, Author

98 Victory House, As shown in The Red Book of West Africa, 1920

They built a vast 12 bayed palatial structure with central pediment (that displays the date 1923) in prime location close to the Accra Customs House and with views across the harbour. They were given generous shipping terms from Elder Dempster who effectively kept them trading until UAC bought the firm in 1933. [206]

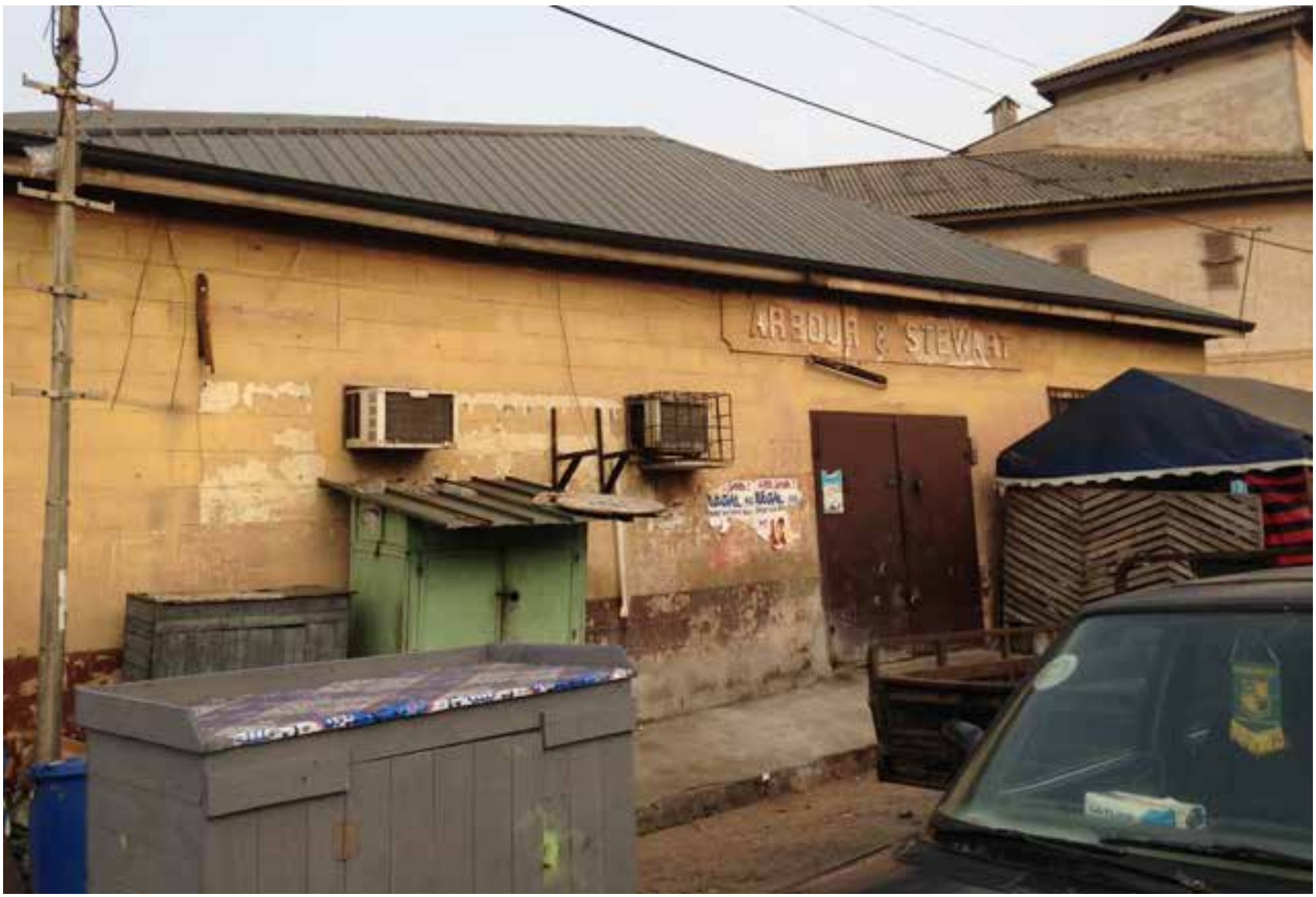
Patterson Zochonis (founded in Sierra Leone in the 1870s by George Patterson and George Zochonis) followed with a similar arrangement on Bannerman Road to Ollivant, both adopting the pattern set by Pickering and Berthoud's 1912 long rectilinear premises which maximised the street frontage,

99 Victory House, 2019, Author

with an extensive compound of sheds and stores set behind. Pickering and Berthoud's premises had retractable solar shades at ground floor level that neatly stored behind the main shutters, and rainwater was collected in a tank.
J. J. Fischer's premises took another approach with the projecting first floor timber gallery providing shade and circulation space. The ribbons and Union flags shown on the photographs were to commemorate the Prince of Wales visit in 1925.
They primarily traded in cotton and cocoa, with a considerable compound adjacent to the shore line. Liverpool-based Charles Lane's stores (on Horse Road) had the expensive solution of a loggia at ground and first floor level, and the premises were given an unusual asymmetrical treatment with a warehouse protruding on one side.
The building is still known as Charles Lane House today and is located very close to the African Products Ltd compound. Here was the celebratory 'Victory House', built in 1919, to serve their motor vehicle and agricultural business. William Galloway was the company chairman, and designed the distinctive main façade with a heavy Doric arcade and quirky entrance portal to the compound. Now heavily altered and with most of the buildings demolished, the gateway is the only surviving relic. Other traders with fewer retail interests did not require these grand and flamboyant premises, and instead focused on produce compounds and the logistics of railway transportation. Frequently occupying lock-ups fashioned from uncut-stone they lined the streets running perpendicular to the harbour.

100 Stone warehouses, James Town, British Museum, ©Trustees of the British Museum, Af,A48.139

101 Stone warehouses on Bannerman Road, 2016, Author



102 Arbour and Stewart, 2019, Author

Arbour and Stewart (founded in 1914) were one such produce firm and established 20 railway depots as well as a prime site adjacent to Paterson Zochonis; but like so many firms they faded away or were absorbed into the vast empire of the UAC, leaving only their finely carved san serif name plates behind (The UTC in Sekondi has a similar approach).
The forty surf ports that were operational in the early 19th Century were reduced to just Accra and Sekondi by 1921, but even here dredging and pumping was required because of silting.[207]
Following the dominance of cocoa and coupled with mechanical transportation the proximity of the local ports to the goods was rendered less important. The impact on construction was dramatic and larger traders diverted their attention to the major towns and mining areas, outsourcing their merchandise for the smaller outposts to local agents.
The older buildings were retained, but very little new investment followed as margins and profits decreased. Millers had large premises on the beach at Dixcove and Saltpond; Swanzy's maintained a large factory at Axim.

In addition to the British traders, the French firm, Compagnie Francaise de l'Afrique Occidentale (CFAO) ran a major operation throughout West Africa, and built two commanding warehouses on Bruce Road, Accra. The crow-stepped roof gables and concrete ventilating blocks generate a distinctive and crisp elevation matched with the Moderne type face signage. In a town where trade marks and brands were all important the CFAO used its architecture and graphics to good effect.
They initially traded from Marseille and also occupied most of the 7th floor of Liverpool's Royal Liver Building. There's a very distinctive, if modest premises found next-door to Ollivant on the High Street; built of brick with a rendered finish it has a similar manner to the modernist CFAO warehouses– could it have belonged to the Society Commerciale de l'Ouest Africa (SCOA), formed by dissident managers of the CFAO? Following their expulsion in World War One the Basel Mission trading arm returned to Gold Coast in the 1920s.

103 Miller at Dixcove, 2017, Author

104 Swanzy at Axim, Reproduced with kind permission of Unilever from an original in Unilever Archives , Uac

They traded as the Union Trade Company (UTC) and developed a very successful operation developing a large four-story building close to the station in the 1950s. Occupying an entire block, the concrete frame with a lightweight façade of panels and jalousie formed a solution that utilised the old louvre system with modern materials to create a bold form and finely detailed composition.[208]

The UTC building was suffering from lack of maintenance and with the collapse of the business in 1999 it now stands abandoned and humiliatingly stripped of its valuable façade materials. SCOA had a large store next-door to UTC on Station Road, and together the two flagship buildings formed a hub for this exciting part of town. SCOA appears to have been subsequently 'refurbished' and the facades clad in glazed panels. In other cases, sadly, nothing of the original building survives, and many structures in and around James Town are at severe risk of either slow collapse through neglect, or rapid erasure through speculative (sometimes unpermitted) development.

Despite being one of the oldest and grandest villas in the city Adawso House was demolished in 2007. It was a valuable historic structure owned by the Vanderpuye family and once home to several businesses including the West African Planters' Corporation.[209] Others such as Azumo House (1914) find themselves engulfed by informal development, but at least this type of encroachment does not harm the historic structure.

The start of the commercial migration away from James Town can perhaps be traced to the Central [Makola] market halls, designed by Thompson, Moir and Galloway in 1921.[210] The northern traders and porters again took up residence, especially with the boom of cocoa, and later, larger businesses lined the periphery of the market, such as the sleek deco sweep of Barclays Bank (who had a similar branch at Kimberly Road too) and Leventis Store with its carefully designed brise soleil (by Maxwell Fry and Jane Drew in 1955).[211]

The arrival of mechanical transport made moving stock into the town easier, and a close proximity to the harbour was increasingly less important, although many enjoyed their prime location and the ability to see the ships appearing on the horizon.

105 CFAO Warehouse Accra, 2018, Author

'106 UTC warehouses, Sekondi, 2018, author'

107 UTC Department Store, Accra (SCOA is on the left hand side), 2018, Author

The customs house (1924), of course had the best vantage, but even Mail Agency, Swanzy and Walkden had a clear view from the first floor. This isn't immediately obvious when these structures are viewed at street level but a quick sojourn down to the beach reveals their strategic placement.

Partial demolition and abandonment of the building shell is a fate that many James Town buildings share, including as we have seen, the old Kingsway store, now heavily used as a football pitch, and the derelict Tarquah House has been successfully rehabilitated as James Town Café. These two models offer some hope for a creative and cultural reuse of this extraordinary collection of buildings.

Surely the entire district is ripe for imaginative development and as an incubator for Ghana's creatives and cultural operators.

Kingsway went on to build a new, larger department store in Accra in 1957, designed by T. P. Bennett & Son it adopted a 'modernist' style with two rectilinear forms abutting a glazed curtain wall. It contained the first escalators in West Africa, as well as air-conditioning and a terrazzo-clad gable facades.[212]

Many others such as the Farisco supermarket (1962, Station Road, now Kwame Nkrumah Ave) were established, employing leading architects (such as Denys Lasdun who also designed the National Museum in Accra and Ghana Commercial Bank in Takoradi). The new stores reflect James Town's changing fortunes as high end retail moved away from the shore and towards the Ridge, Cantonments and suburban developments around Oxford Street. The UTC and other stores in James Town were perceived as '"second-class" because they were closer to the city's central market and High Street'.[213]

It was not just the retail sector of James Town that was affected through these developments, the creation of the state sponsored Ambassador Hotel (designed by A. G. Paton of the PWD, £559,990: 1956) formed part of a drive by Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah to present a new 'modernised' identity and nationalist image of a new country about to throw off its colonial past, shifting the focus of activity around Liberia Road.

108 Collapsed Building on Horse Road, 2018

109 Unpermitted Development, 2018

110 Azumo House, 2018, Author

111 Barclays Makola, 2018, Author

112 Barclays Kimberly Ave, 1969,
Courtesy of Barclays Group Archives, 0038-1349

114 Leventis, 1955, private collection

113 Leventis, 2018, Author

115 The New Kingsway,
Reproduced with kind permission of Unilever from an original in Unilever Archives, UNI/1/11/9/46/1

116 Kingsway Interior, Reproduced with kind permission of Unilever from an original in Unilever Archives, UAC/1/11/9/47/17

117 Kingsway Interior, Reproduced with kind permission of Unilever from an original in Unilever Archives, UAC/1/11/9/46/5

118 Typical Store in Sekondi, Reproduced with kind permission of Unilever from an original in Unilever Archives, GB1752.UAC/1/11/9/12/36

119 Farisco, postcard, private collection

120 Farisco, 2018, Author

121 Ambassador Hotel, postcard, private collection

The oldest hotel in Ghana, the Sea View Hotel (built 1873), inevitably suffered as a result of the new competition and perhaps through its association with the British occupation, despite it being eventually owned by the Industrial Development Corporation. It was located opposite the James Town lighthouse and after a steady decline was demolished to make way for a church building in 2015.

Further expansion was encouraged by the creation of a pioneering 'ring road' by the end of the 1920s, built just a couple of years after the UK's first ring road in Liverpool. Accra's ring road was 2 miles from the centre of the town and with a width of 33m (100ft) it circumscribed a 7.5 mile arc, permitting suburban development and further encouraging motorised traffic around the town. Many of these developments were undertaken by African enterprises, including the substantial estate in Osu [around Ogbamey Street] with large plots for individual (concrete) villas set around twin crescents and central park.[214] New village layouts were set out at Tesano, Avenor, Kpehein 1928 and bordering on Riponsville a series of very grand villas were constructed by African merchants.[215] The colonial expansion continued too, and a urther 55 'new type' bungalows were designed and approved.[16]

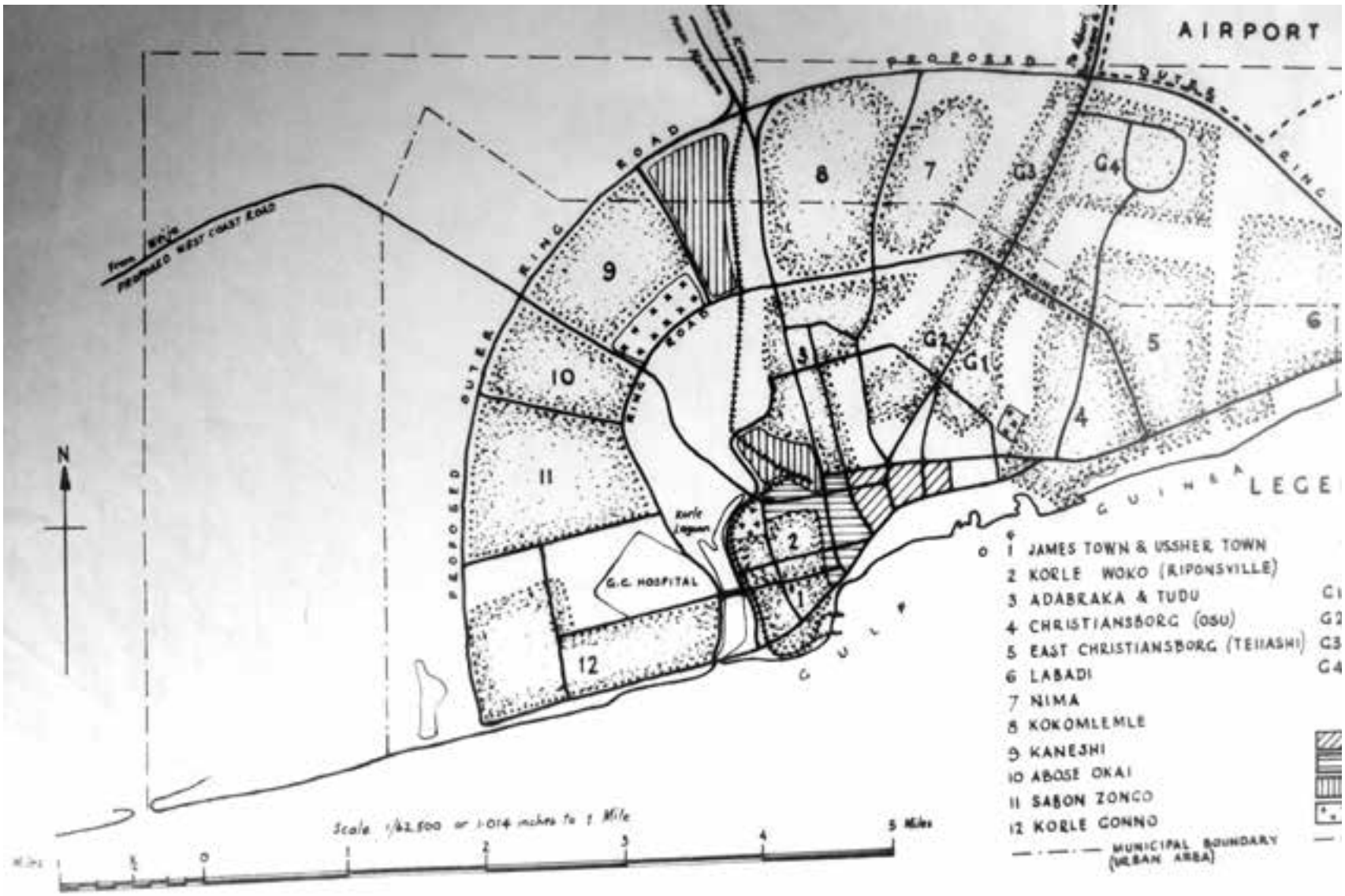
The expansion of Accra's suburbs continued into the early 1930s with plots marked out with concrete posts and land owners 'co-operating with the Town Planning Officers in the adjustment of boundaries and the free grants of land for roads'.[217] Adabraka was extended to the south west, and the European Segregation zone continued to be spread across Osu, with £6000 compensation paid to Osu Stool and land purchased north of the European hospital for £1350.[218]

The financial depression halted all building work in the Colony in 1931-32. The over-reliance on a single crop that served the luxury markets of Europe and America devastated the economy of Gold Coast. The budget for 1931 was reduced by 95 per cent to £68,865 compared to £1,216,928 in 1929. Such extreme shift in fortune had a significant impact on the import of materials as well as on the subcontracting and labour market. The PWD technical/design staff was 'retrenched' with 40 per cent of Europeans and 26 per cent of Africans laid off.[219]

122 New housing on south edge of Riponsville, 2019, Author

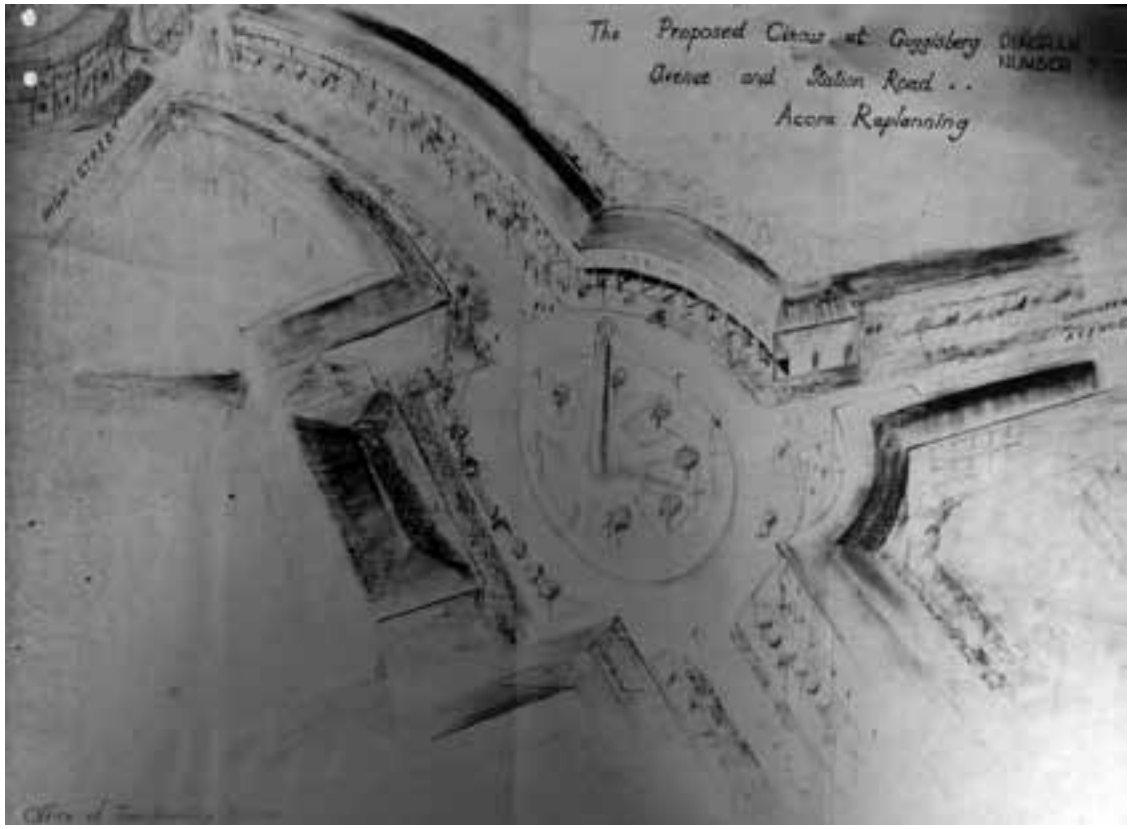
123 Bungalow (new type), built in 1928, photographed in 2018, Author

124 The Supreme Court, Accra, 2018, Author

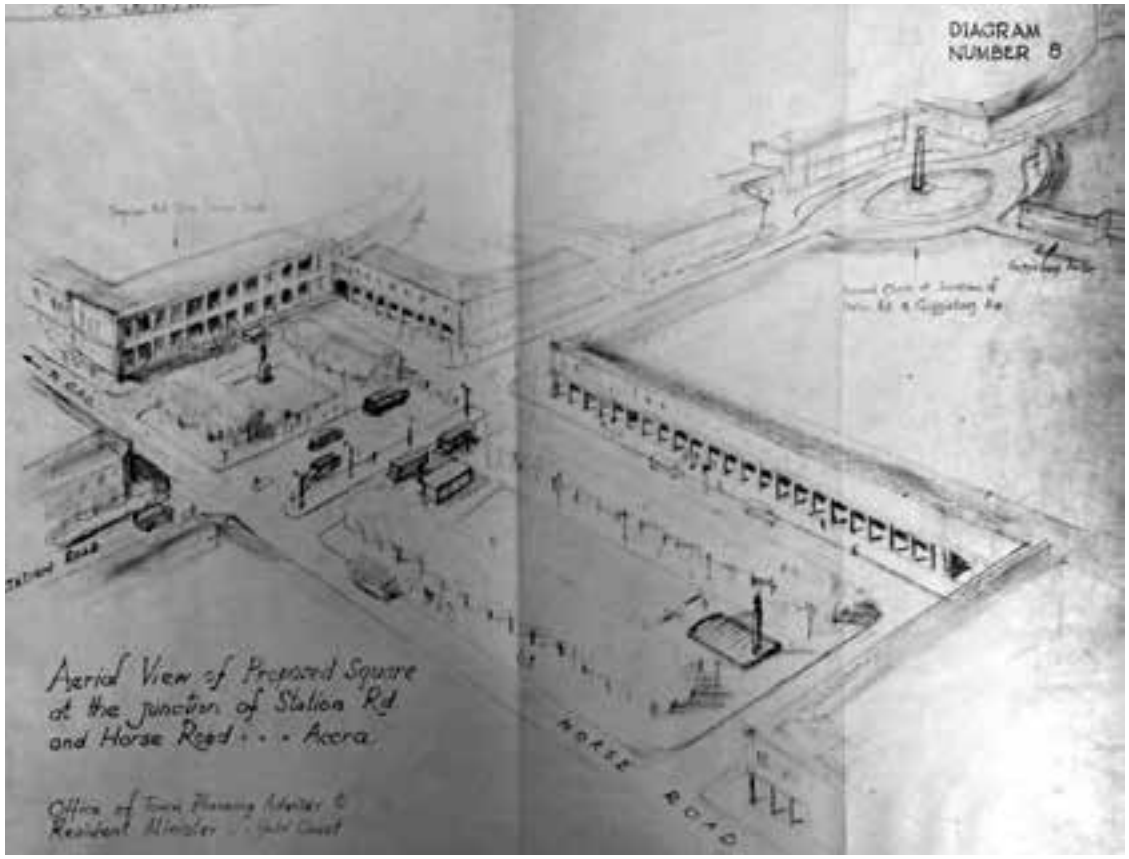


125 Maxwell Fry Plan 'Town Planning in Accra', map13, 1945, PRAAD, CSO 20/12/20

The PWD also employed 6,000 labourers, and such a considerable workforce could only be kept fully engaged if building relied on human effort, rather than investing in plant and machines.[220]
It was only the Kumasi Water Works and Accra's Supreme Court (a classical style pre-cursor for Legon University, constructed from reinforced concrete, £70,000) that eased the plight of excess labour, 'but even with these works on hand unemployment is widespread and extensive'.[221] Work was stopped on the Court until additional borrowing was secured.[222]
The 'Colonial Development Fund' was established to stimulate new projects and infrastructure (and partially address previous lack of investment).
'Free grants' were awarded to schemes such as the Tamale Veterinary Laboratory, as well as loans for large infrastructure projects like Cape Coast's electricity supply.[223]
The loans stimulated activity and trade, if not growth, but mainly assisted British manufacturing and shipping, and of course had to be repaid.
The population of Accra dramatically increased during the 1930s and various attempts at 'slum clearances' were made.



126 Perspective drawing of junction between Station and Horse Roads, 'Town Planning in Accra', map8, 1945, PRAAD, CSO 20/12/20



127 Perspective drawing proposed circus at Station Rd and Guggisberg Ave, 'Town Planning in Accra', map7, 1945, PRAAD, CSO 20/12/20

The lack of sufficient and affordable housing was exacerbated following the earthquake in 1939, and a large number of temporary and informal dwellings were built, many within James Town and amongst the spacious plots of Adabraka.[224]
A comprehensive city plan was not however prepared until Edwin Maxwell Fry was posted to Gold Coast during World War Two, and was subsequently appointed Town Planning Advisor to West Africa.[225] He conducted a detailed study and proposals for most of the major towns in West Africa, and together with Theodore Shealtiel Clerk delivered one of the first attempts at establishing a broad city-wide strategy for Accra. He viewed the city as a series of neighbourhoods connected by an outer ringroad with each area served by its own shops, community centres, schools and parks.

128 Community Centre, 2019, Author

129 Community Centre, postcard, 1950s, private collection

The report also featured perspective drawings for James Town in an attempt to create a more civic and refined public space including monuments and fountains surrounded by uniform colonnades and neat city blocks.
The proposal extended Guggisberg Avenue and Station Road, as well as creating a new public square at the intersection of Horse Road and Station Road.

The intention was to improve street connectivity and simplify the road layouts, but it would have resulted in substantial portions of James Town being erased in the process, not least the demolition of the Wato nightclub and most of Salaga Market.
The proposed 'circus' at Guggisberg Avenue and Station Road would have intersected the High Street opposite Kingsway Stores, again erasing most of the congested 'problem' areas in one move.[226]
The plan received much interest but there was little appetite for such monumental gestures and upheaval, not least as the aftermath of World War Two saw major demonstrations in Accra by ex-servicemen disgruntled with their treatment, and fully aware of the fragility of the Colonial regime.
The usual excuses were given for the lack of investment, 'shortage of staff, materials and equipment have impeded the improvement of housing conditions...but as these difficulties are overcome the tempo will be accelerated.'[227] It was too little too late, and whilst the Colonial Development and Welfare scheme saw some investment into schools and teacher training colleges more impact was made through the large businesses who sponsored the new craze for community centres and meeting halls.[228]

130 Library, Accra, 2016, Author

131 Library, Accra, 1957, The National Archives, CO 1069-46-23r

132 Mosaic mural at the Community Centre, Kofi Antubam, 2012, Author'

The UAC 'gifted' a Community Centre to Accra, designed by Maxwell Fry and Jane Drew and built opposite the Supreme Court in 1950.[229]
The community centre has a vast mosaic on its front façade by artist Kofi Antubam, who also carved the wood relief at the Library. What happened to his murals at the Ambassador Hotel?[230]
Kwame Nkrumah's election to Prime Minister the following year further accelerated similar schemes as the country eagerly anticipated and worked towards independence.
The built environment was to reflect the political ambitions and shifts, and architectural students, such as Peter N. K. Turkson designed a new parliament building for their thesis projects in anticipation of what was to come.[231]
Other civic buildings were commissioned shortly after, creating a strong educational hub around the courts, including the Library by Nickson and Borys.

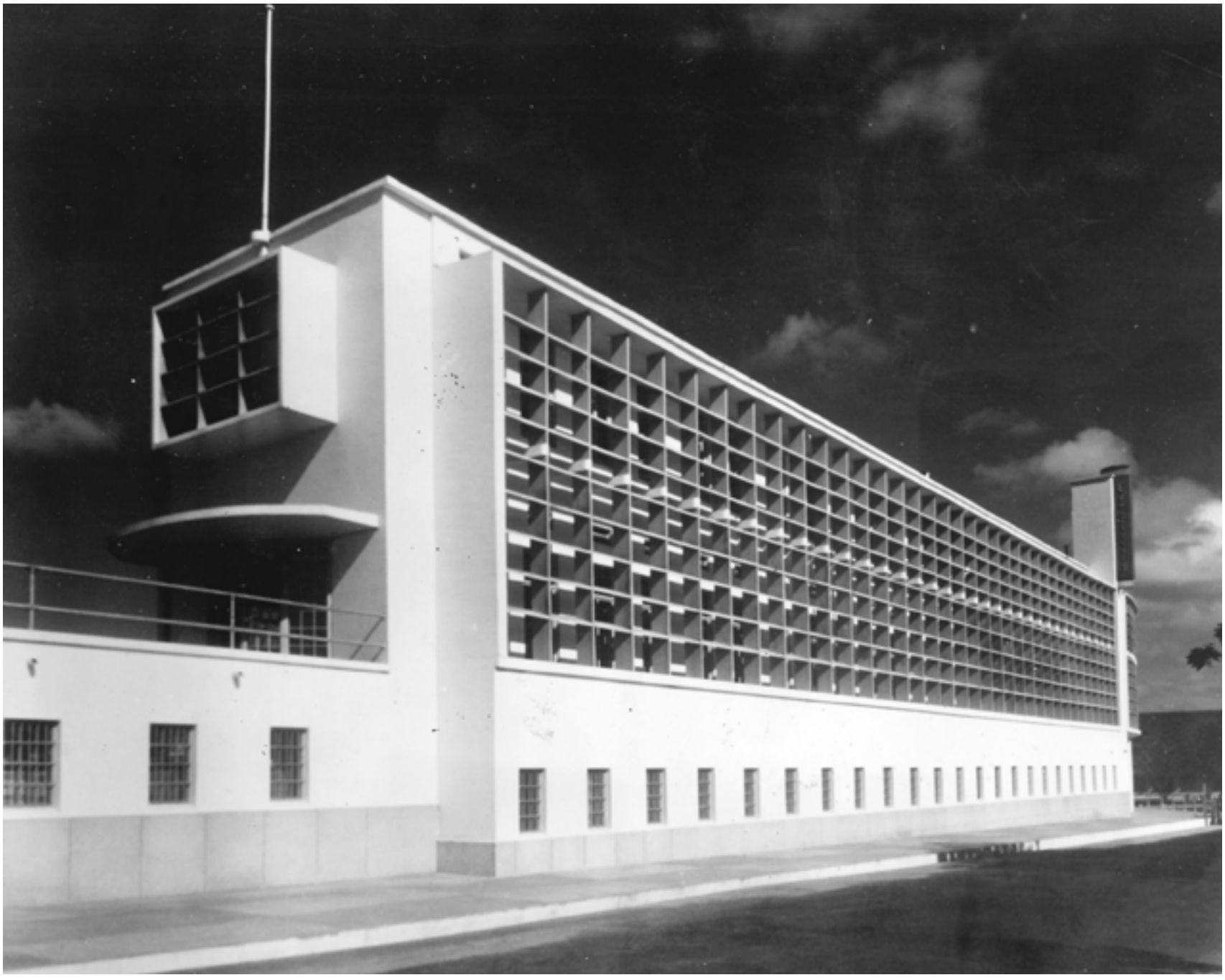
The quasi-governmental IDC (by James Cubitt) was built on Station Road – and together with the library displayed exquisite examples of an architecture that embodied a sense of new beginnings and optimism, whilst also being rooted in the place, climate and culture. The use of sculpture and decoration was one approach by which this architecture responded to the local context, but more than this, the buildings took aspects of Western modernism and translated/reflected/absorbed this vocabulary, making it their own and frequently surpassing the creative efforts of Europe
It was never perceived as 'imported' or derivative architecture, or somehow not Ghanaian - because it was so finely tuned to that place, and because of Accra's receptive nature as a port city. Furthermore, the recruitment and collaboration with architects from socialist countries immediately after independence stimulated further experimentation and innovative approaches.[232]
When this was blended with a political agenda that was ambitious for new development, infrastructure and 'modernisation' a fertile condition for new and tentative ideas was set. For sure, many have articulately argued that this type of architecture was merely a continuation of the colonial approach, albeit with a different façade, but this is to accede far too much power and dominance to a waning regime, and undermines the choices and decisions being made by the new Government, clients and businesses during the 1950s and beyond.
A city that commissioned the George Padmore Library, Children's Library, Bank of Ghana, Electricity House, Cedi House, and so many other carefully designed works throughout the country, [233] should have immense confidence in its creative ability, taste and farsightedness.

133 Carved Wood Sculpture at the Library Kofi Antubam, 2016, Author

Further plans and proposals followed including the very detailed and sensitive report from 1958 by B. A. Trevallion –but like so many visionary plans it was soon shelved.
James Town, the harbour and High Street have a fascinating story to tell, and coupled with the array of large redundant warehouses and semi-industrial buildings, coast line and beaches, possess a unique and desirable resource.

A process of rehabilitation, reimagining and genuine consultation is urgently required to channel the energy and latent talent that is widespread in this district. With some courage,
investment, and conviction there is no reason to doubt that this rich and varied heritage could not form one of the most diverse, creative, and commercially attractive parts of the city once more.

134 George Padmore Library, 2016, Author



135 Electricity House, c.1960, private collection

Footnote

192 See Birgit Meyer, 'Sensational Movies: Video, Vison, and Christianity in Ghana', (Oakland, University of California Press, 2015) and Nate Plageman, 'Highlife Saturday Night: Popular Music and Social Change in Urban Ghana', (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2013).
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210 Report on the Public Works Department for the Year 1921, Annual Departmental Reports relating to the Gold Coast and Togoland, 1843-1957, p .28. They were also appointed to build Koforidua post office in 1930, See Report on the Public Works Department for the Year 1930-31, Annual Departmental Reports relating to the Gold Coast and Togoland, 1843-1957, p42. Ato Quayson, 'Oxford Street, Accra: City Life and the Itineraries of Transnationalism' (Durham, Duke University Press, 2014), p.76.
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This catalogue accompanies and contextualises the exhibition, **'Sharing stories from James Town: The Creation of Mercantile Accra',** first shown at James Town Café, Accra in May 2019.
This rich collection of maps, drawings, photographs and postcards has been carefully gathered from 15 archives, as well as private collections, with many exhibited and published here for the first time. This array of visual material sits alongside a narrative and commentary on the growth and development of Accra that together forms a discussion about how the city viewed itself and the image it wished to broadcast. Through these surviving traces of Accra's varied and often charged architecture and planning, we examine its history, materialisation, and political ambition.

It might appear that the city is 'not what it once was', but this is far from the truth. Indeed, Accra is fortunate to possess such an array of important heritage buildings and equally fascinating stories associated with them.
A careful and sensitive (re)use of 'heritage' can enhance and increase the value of new projects, creating not only a sense of place and belonging, but also environmentally sustainable solutions.
The array of markets, warehouses, villas and compounds is a gift for creative industries, events, recitals, as well as small scale production, manufacturing and enterprise, and we hope this exhibition can provoke and stimulate further interest, research and ambition in this historic core of the city.

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