

This is an age where we need to rethink what architecture does best and how it serves people. Is architecture just solving problems and making efficiencies and being elegant or is it making meaning of our environments and trying to teach us about how we are, where we are and where want to go? (Adjaye, 2012)

While the design process is meant to be participatory, the limits to how many (potential) users are involved and how the design team interprets their needs is perhaps often substituted by empirical evidence, architectural theory and/or logic. It is by no surprise that buildings the world over generate debate, some more than others; suggesting what else people think or would have preferred. Indeed, the issues raised may point to the overall aesthetic, how relevant, functional, sustainable or context specific projects are. These same issues at times get mixed up with tendencies to associate and view architects as having an elitist approach to their profession. Nonetheless, it is evident that the root cause of such concerns may be specific to a given culture.

This paper focuses on four buildings located in East Africa on the Uganda Martyrs University campus. These buildings were conceived, designed and built between 2003 and 2010, the second decade of the University's existence. They include: the Terraced Houses (2005) by the main entry to the University, the Thomas Moore Office block (2007), the Onyango Registry Building (2008) and the Anna Montano Building for Health Sciences (2010). These buildings were identified because they stand out in terms of location and uniqueness in their context. The choice of buildings was prompted by the debate they have since generated. The paper set out to obtain pertinent feedback from the community and how the original intentions of the design team successfully or not, manifest themselves. Ultimately, the study sought answers to three key questions: (i) What is considered 'architecture' in this context? (ii) How are local architecture trends informed (or not) by contemporary global practice and architectural history and/or theory? (iii) What are some of those things architects probably miss or take for granted during the design and/or construction process?

Key words: *Architecture, Buildings, Design, People, Context.*



Alex Ndirwami

Andirwami@umu.ac.ug

*Faculty Of The Built Environment
Uganda Martyrs University,
Kampala, Uganda.*

**PEOPLE'S PERCEPTIONS OF
'NEW' ARCHITECTURE. A DIALOGUE
BETWEEN THE ARCHITECT, THE
ARCHITECTURE AND THE CONSUMER.**

