THE DYNAMICS OF STREET FURNITURE IN URBAN CENTRES: THE LAGOS EXAMPLE

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Abstract

This paper examined the dynamics of street furniture in Urban Centres using Lagos-State as a case study. It called for the understanding of the street furniture as a collective term referring not only to the street surface but also the contents along its stretch. Such contents include elements related to the functional and decorative physical conditions of the street. Empirically, street furniture is the structural aggregate of the road, its drains and utility lines, sidewalks, kerbs and intersections. The study have succeeded in identifying the various definitions given to street furniture, different types of street furniture in Lagos metropolis using survey method of research investigation. This study, however, demonstrated the need for the provision of street furniture in urban area like Lagos State and will serve as reference for the policy maker in this field of study.

Key Words: Street Furniture, Urban Centres, Lagos

1.0 Introduction

Concept of street furniture, its application goes a long way in shaping the urban environment particularly with regards to planning and architecture in providing the needed safety, security and beauty.

The concept of the Street Furniture need to be studied majorly because of the aesthetics value in the cities. Also the proper planning, design and management of street and landscape furniture enhances the functionality, aesthetics and add value to the built environment. Street Furniture is actually a collective
term referring not only to the street surface but also the contents along its stretch. Such contents include elements related to the functional and decorative physical conditions of the street.

Empirically, street furniture is the structural aggregate of the road, its drains and utility lines, sidewalks, kerbs and intersections. Figure 1 shows a typical road section highlighting the vehicular right of road way, kerb, green setback from pedestrian walkway. Utility lines are possible through underneath of entire surface with inspection chambers. Utility lines are also sometimes installed on poles on road surface, (picture 1), for low installation costs but better when buried for efficiency advantage in crisscross of overhead cables promoting clear sight and saving vandalism.

Figure 1 shows a typical road section: Source: Authors Field Survey, 2012
Evidence Of The Street Furniture

Street furniture is also a vast array of equipment placed in, on, or over the road for safety and convenience on the street and including various purposes like traffic control and lighting, information and communication, relaxation and waiting, waste control and drinking, cooling and beautification, immortalisation etc.

These include traffic barriers, traffic lights, street lamps, advert boards, signage, post boxes, phone boxes, bus/taxi/cycle shelters, benches, brief toilets, waste bins, drinking water stands, fountains, watering troughs, planters etc some of which are shown in pictures 2 to 6 of the photo spool.
Picture 2: Shows A Photo Spool Street Cluster as Integral Part of City.

Picture 3: Shows Street Lights Line Up For Lights Illumination

Picture 4: Street Shelter London England

Picture 5: Coordinated Information Signage London England
Lagos: Pictures Speak the Truth: Authors Field Survey, 2012

Picture 6: Benches, Planters and Waste Bins

Picture 7: Shows Fountains

Picture 8: Shows Ola Ayeni Street, Ikeja

Picture 9: Herbert Macaulay Way, Yaba
3.0 Street Furniture: The Lighting Content

**Lighting:**
* Illumination for traffic movements.
* Warning of increased security.
* Support for signs and information symbols.
* Accentuates buildings and their entrances.
* Brings beauty into visual prominence.
* Promotes landscape integrity.
* Marks point of decision, defining way and surface.
* Differentiates between drive and walk ways.
* Provides ample light at pedestrian crossings.
* Eliminates all sources of interruptive glare providing consistent light.

4.0 Street Furniture: The Information Content

**Information:**
* Disseminate information about services and products for the visual consumption of the people.
* Visually influence the perceptional value of street as an urban open space.
* Varies in size, colour and form and are often placed in symbiotic relationship with other street furniture.
* Provide order and clarity to the traffic way pattern in the landscape.
* Often times there are guidelines for size, color and positioning of advertisement mediums which are provided by various transport, advertisement and government agencies.

5.0 Street Furniture: The Planting Content

**Planting:**
* Softens the urban hard surface.
* Adds seasonal colour to the landscape.
* Provides shades and absorbs precipitation.
* Freshen the air and modifies climatic experience.
* Becomes part of the city’s open space system.
* Planting in the street furniture articulates and strengthens the landscape.
* It frames views and vistas, anchoring freestanding buildings while providing visual transition from place to place and objects to objects.

6.0 Street Furniture: A Case Study Lagos-State

Street furniture in Lagos is neither here nor there in the sense that they are either not there at all, scanty and haphazard if at all or in a state of disrepair when available. The categories of street furniture found on the streets of Lagos vary based on the class of road as Trunk A, B or C and it is on this basis that an inventory to check the extent of provision of street furniture in Lagos is done. Ironically, the trunk A roads have more street furniture than trunk B and C roads in that order. Trunk A roads are arterial and principal connecting roads in the city while trunk B roads are collector roads that feed the arterial from various neighbourhoods. Trunk C roads are local residential and neighbourhood roads. Study looked into various aspect of street furniture and ranked their presence and quality on a scale 0-3. Study appropriated value of 0 to non- availability and poor condition, value 1 to availability but in poor condition and value 2 to good condition. Study appropriately value of 3 to excellent condition. Study found that street furniture in Lagos is neither here nor there in the sense that they are either not there at all, scanty and haphazard if at all or in a state of disrepair when available.
condition, value 2 to fair condition and value 3 to good condition. Study examined Alfred Rewane road in Ikoyi, Lagos as a trunk A road and Okanlawon Street, off Alhaji Masha road, Surulere, Lagos.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Identified Furniture</th>
<th>Alfred Rewane Road</th>
<th>Okanlawon Street</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Roadway</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Drainage</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kerbs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sidewalk</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Plant strip</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Street parking</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Power line</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Telephone line</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Tree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Advert board</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Result</td>
<td>18/10=1.8 or 2</td>
<td>6/10=0.6 or 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Authors Field Survey, 2012*

The result of the table above reveals that Alfred Rewane road in Ikoyi, a good example of trunk A road which is a functional baroque street typified by adequate planting strips and median to receive trees, is in fairly acceptable condition based on the identified street furniture but will definitely fall short of provision if all that is expected to be available were looked out for. The result of the study on the other hand reveals that Okanlawon street in Surulere, a principal axis and a strong link between Ikate, Aguda and Masha areas of Surulere and where there is heavy presence of pedestrian and vehicular activities, is obviously in a poor condition based on the identified street furniture and will definitely almost completely fall short of provision if all that is expected to be available were checked.
6.0 Street Furniture in Lagos: Factors Against

- The erection of fences along the roads as security devices deprive street users the benefits associated with visual continuity of privately landscape building frontage facades.
- The roads are shrunken as a result of intense activities on the corridor.
- Locations of open drainage channels along collector streets reduce planting strips to narrow width between beacon lines and drainage channels.
- The paved roadways are not trimmed by kerbs to in particular discourage parking on planting strips and sidewalks.
- The spillover of markets, heavy concentration of commercial activities, vehicles and pedestrian movements pose a threat to possibility of street furniture and healthy environment.

7.0 Street Furniture in Lagos: Way Out

- Necessary street furniture such as light, traffic control systems, functional drainage channels and pedestrian walkways should be provided.
- Creation of functional bus stops and attractive bus shelters conducive for users of roadway.
- Clear separation and demarcation of on–street parking for taxis and private cars.
- Planting as a major environment tool in sustainability should be encouraged to provide shade, sun- breakers and much needed oxygen.

8.0 Street Furniture: Implications for Planning and Architecture

- Concept of street furniture, its application goes a long way in shaping the urban environment particularly with regards to planning and architecture in providing the needed safety, security and beauty.
- Proper planning, design and management of street and landscape furniture enhance the functionality, aesthetics and add value to the built environment.
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