



Structures of Servitude: Slavery and Colonial Space in Forcados

Abstract

The study interrogates the role of enslaved and coerced labor in shaping the colonial built environment of Forcados, a key trading outpost in the Niger Delta during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While colonial architecture has often been studied through stylistic, administrative, or technological lenses, the labor systems that enabled its construction and maintenance remain insufficiently examined. This paper addresses this gap by foregrounding slavery and forced labor as central to the production of colonial space. The study adopts a qualitative, interdisciplinary methodology combining critical literature review, analysis of museum collections, oral documentary sources, fieldwork-based site visits, and systematic architectural documentation. These methods are complemented by architectural visual storytelling, employing photographs, measured sketches, spatial mapping, and narrative visualization to reconstruct the material and social histories embedded in colonial structures.

Through the examination of ports, warehouses, administrative buildings, and infrastructural landscapes, the paper analyzes colonial architecture as a spatial instrument of control, surveillance, and economic extraction sustained by racialized labor regimes. Rather than treating these structures as neutral remnants, the research situates them within broader systems of imperial governance and labor organization. The paper further explores the postcolonial afterlives of these spaces, examining how contemporary communities in Forcados engage with, reinterpret, neglect, or contest colonial-era structures rooted in histories of servitude. By integrating labor history, architectural analysis, and postcolonial theory, the study reframes colonial architecture as a repository of social memory and structural violence.

Ultimately, this research contributes to debates on coloniality, heritage, and preservation ethics by positioning labor as a central analytical lens. Forcados serves as a critical case through which hidden histories

embedded in colonial architecture are recovered, challenging dominant historiographies and informing more equitable approaches to postcolonial heritage practice.

Keywords

Colonialism, Slavery, Labor, Heritage

Asuru Lutherking Petercan

Architect and art curator from Rivers State, Nigeria, passionate about vernacular architecture and cultural heritage. His work explores the intersections of tradition, sustainability, and postcolonial identity in the built environment. Asuru is currently re-searching the archives of postcolonial Nigerian architects, uncovering how they navigated and responded to colonial legacies in their designs. He advocates for community-driven preservation and the integration of indigenous knowledge into contemporary practice. With a background in project management, he combines technical skill with cultural insight to promote resilient, heritage-based development that challenges colonial narratives and reclaims Nigeria's architectural identity.

Chidi Siene Eghelle

Earthen architecture professional with a specialized focus on architectural landscapes of historic and heritage significance. Her work examines the social logic that shapes both minor and major spaces, exploring how cultural practices, material traditions, and everyday use inform spatial organization. Through research and practice, she investigates earthen construction as a sustainable and context-responsive system, particularly within heritage environments. Chidi's interests lie at the intersection of landscape, architecture, and social history, where built form becomes a record of collective memory and lived experience. She is committed to advancing research-driven approaches to the preservation and reinterpretation of heritage landscapes.

Duke Abigail

Architect and interior designer from Rivers State, Nigeria, with a deep passion for heritage and vernacular architecture. She is currently pursuing a PhD, with research focused on monuments of slavery, specifically exploring slave-era architecture in Forcados and Ikot Ekpene. Her work investigates the historical significance of these structures and their influence on contemporary spatial narratives. An advocate for the preservation and critical study of slave architecture, she explores the intersection of culture, memory, and community-driven heritage conservation. With a background in project management, she combines technical expertise with strategic insight to protect Nigeria's built heritage.

Introduction

Forcados occupies a significant position in the historical geography of the Niger Delta as one of the earliest coastal points of contact between West Africa and European trading powers. From the late fifteenth century onwards, the settlement functioned as a strategic node within transatlantic and regional trade networks, facilitating the movement of commodities, people, and imperial authority.¹ Over successive centuries, Portuguese, British, and commercial interests transformed the area into a landscape structured by extraction, surveillance, and control. Yet, while economic and political histories of these processes have received scholarly attention, the architectural and spatial dimensions through which colonial labour regimes were materialised remain comparatively underexplored.

Colonial architecture in West Africa has often been examined through stylistic, administrative, and technological perspectives, emphasising institutional buildings, infrastructural development, and urban planning systems.² Such approaches, however, frequently marginalise the labour systems that enabled these environments to be produced and sustained. In contexts such as Forcados, enslaved and coerced African labour constituted the foundation upon

which ports, warehouses, prisons, residences, and transportation networks were constructed.³ These spaces did not merely facilitate trade and governance; they embodied racial hierarchies, disciplinary practices, and extractive logics embedded within imperial rule.⁴ Recent scholarship in postcolonial architectural studies has increasingly emphasised the need to situate built environments within histories of exploitation, dispossession, and resistance. This shift reflects broader debates concerning heritage, memory, and spatial justice in societies shaped by colonial domination. In Nigeria, however, studies connecting slavery, labour, and architectural production remain limited, particularly outside well-documented sites such as Badagry and Calabar. Forcados, despite its historical prominence, has received little sustained scholarly attention in this regard.

This paper addresses this gap by examining how systems of slavery and coerced labour shaped the spatial organisation and architectural forms of colonial Forcados.⁵ It investigates the material

1. A. Ryder, "An Early Portuguese Trading Voyage to the Forcados River," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 1, no. 4 (1959), 294–321.
2. David Anderson, and Richard Rathbone, *Africa's Urban Past* (Heinemann, 1999).

3. Leigh Gardner, "Slavery, Coercion, and Economic Development in Sub-Saharan Africa," *Business History Review* 97, no. 2 (2023), 199–223.
4. Danilyn Rutherford, "Atlantic Slavery and the Making of the Modern World: Wenner-Gren Symposium Supplement 22," *Current Anthropology* 61, no. 22 (2020), 141–144.
5. Jemima Pierre, "Slavery, Anthropological Knowledge, and the Racialization of Africans," *Current Anthropology* 61, no. 22 (2020): 220–231.



Figure 1. Forcados river, prison structures completely submerged by the shoreline of the river caused by erosion, seasonal flooding and neglect of the structures. Authors' fieldwork, 2025.

infrastructures of trade, confinement, residence, and burial as expressions of power sustained through racialised labour regimes. By foregrounding the role of African workers and enslaved populations in the construction and maintenance of these environments, the study challenges narratives that attribute colonial development solely to European planning and technological expertise.⁶

Methodologically, the research adopts an interdisciplinary approach combining critical literature review, analysis of museum collections, oral documentary sources, and fieldwork-based architectural documentation. Site visits, photographic surveys, measured sketches, and architectural visual storytelling techniques are employed to reconstruct the social and material histories embedded in surviving structures and ruined landscapes.⁷ The paper argues that colonial architecture in Forcados functions as a material archive of servitude, encoding histories of exploitation within everyday landscapes. It further contends that contemporary neglect and environmental degradation of these sites reflect ongoing processes of historical erasure. By situating Forcados within wider debates on coloniality and built heritage, the study contributes to emerging efforts to re-centre labour in architectural historiography and to promote more critical and ethically grounded approaches to postcolonial preservation.

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6. Andrew Apter, *The Pan-African Nation: Oil and the Spectacle of Culture in Nigeria* (University of Chicago Press, 2005).
 7. Brad Lucas, and Margaret Strain, "Keeping the Conversation Going: The Archive Thrives on Interviews and Oral History," in *Working in the Archives: Practical Research Methods for Rhetoric and Composition*, 1st ed. (Southern Illinois University Press, 2010).



Figure 2. Foundation of prisons in current state at Forcados river front. Authors' fieldwork, 2025.



Figure 3. Current state of the Wharf structure designed and built by the Portuguese colonial masters when they first arrived in Forcados, 1486-1500s. Authors' fieldwork, 2025.

Literature Review

European engagement with the Niger Delta region intensified from the late fifteenth century following Portuguese maritime expansion along the West African coast, driven primarily by commercial interests in gold, ivory, pepper, and later enslaved persons.^{8,9}

Portuguese navigators established temporary trading posts and informal settlements across these sites, relying heavily on African intermediaries and labour systems embedded within existing political and kinship structures. Unlike later colonial regimes characterised by formal territorial administration, early Portuguese activity operated through negotiated alliances with local rulers and commercial brokers, combining traditional labour obligations with emerging coercive

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8. E. J. Alagoa, "Long-Distance Trade and States in the Niger Delta," *The Journal of African History* 11, no. 3 (1970), 319–329.
 9. Peter Nwilo, and Olusegun Badejo, *Impacts and Management of Oil Spill Pollution along the Nigerian Coastal Areas* (2006), 1–15. Nigeria has a coastline of approximately 853km facing the Atlantic Ocean. This coastline lies between latitude 4° 10' to 6° 20' N and longitude 2° 45' to 8° 35' E. The Nigerian coast is composed of four distinct geomorphology units namely the Barrier-Lagoon Complex; the Mud Coast; the Arcuate Niger Delta and the Strand Coast. In 1956, Royal Dutch Shell discovered crude oil at Oloibiri, a village in the Niger Delta, and commercial production began in 1958. Today, there are about 606 oil fields in the Niger Delta, of which 360 are on-shore and 246 offshore. Nigeria is now the largest oil producer in Africa and the sixth largest in the world, averaging 2.7 million barrels per day.

practices.¹⁰ Although slavery already existed within regional systems, European demand intensified its scale and reoriented its organisation towards export and infrastructural production. Enslaved individuals and bonded labourers were increasingly deployed in the construction of storage facilities, jetties, windmills, wharf platforms, and rudimentary warehouses supporting maritime trade.¹¹

These early infrastructures relied predominantly on locally available materials such as timber, palm fibres, and mud-based composites, reflecting indigenous environmental knowledge and climatic adaptation strategies. However, European supervision introduced new spatial hierarchies that separated trading zones, labour quarters, and administrative areas, embedding social stratification within the physical landscape. From the seventeenth century onwards, British commercial interests gradually displaced Portuguese dominance in the Niger Delta through chartered trading companies and monopolistic agreements, marking a transition towards more rigid systems of labour control and spatial regulation.¹² The construction of fortified warehouses, customs posts, detention facilities, and administrative compounds reflected an expanding emphasis on discipline, taxation, and surveillance. By the eighteenth century, colonial architecture in coastal settlements had become closely integrated with imperial governance structures, while labour regimes were formalised through contracts, debt systems, and compulsory service.¹³ Enslaved and coerced workers formed the backbone of construction enterprises, maintaining docks, roads, drainage systems, and storage complexes essential to imperial commerce, yet they remained largely invisible within colonial records that prioritised administrative efficiency and commercial profitability, exhibiting the Portuguese architectural design style and external finishes like wood patterns and corrugated steel members for



Figure 4. Portuguese Brazilian styled building in Abonnema Rivers State. Preconservation study of the Amayanabo's Palace, Warebi, 2024.

external walls.¹⁴

Recent scholarship increasingly argues that early colonial infrastructure should be understood as a spatial manifestation of evolving systems of domination rather than as neutral economic development, and in Forcados and its regional counterparts, early building practices established enduring patterns of segregation, extraction, and dependency that continued under later British administration.¹⁵

Architecture of Forcados, Landscapes, Sea Routes, and Colonial Power

The architectural development of Forcados was deeply shaped by its geographical position within the Niger Delta's complex network of creeks, estuaries, and navigable waterways.¹⁶ As a coastal settlement situated at the mouth of major river systems, Forcados functioned as a maritime gateway connecting inland commercial zones to Atlantic trade routes. This strategic location enabled European traders to access

10. Christopher DeCorse, *Power, Political Economy, and Historical Landscapes of the Modern World: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (State University of New York Press, 2019); Miranda Critchley, *Infrastructural Narratives: "Progress", Resistance and Refusal in London (1844-1885) and on the Uganda Railway (1896-1904)* (University College London, 2021).
11. Mark Hanna Watkins, "K. Onwuka Dike, Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, 1830-1885," *The Journal of Negro History* 41, no. 3 (1956): 260-63.
12. Iain Jackson, Harrison Ewan, Michele Tenzon, Rixt Woudstra, and Claire Tunstall, *Architecture, Empire, and Trade* (Bloomsbury 2025).
13. J. M. Branco, "Portuguese Traditional Timber Structures: Survey, Analysis and Strengthening," *Protection of Historical Buildings* (2009), 261-66.

14. Dulce Franco Henriques, "Understanding Structural Timber in Old Buildings in Lisbon, Portugal: From Knowledge of Construction Processes to Physical-Mechanical Properties," *Buildings* 15, no. 7 (2025), 1161.
15. Rebekah Yousaf, *Examining Slavery's Architectural Finishes: The Importance of Interdisciplinary Investigations of Humble Spaces* (2018).
16. Becky Mogo, Chiamaka Obiageli Mogo, Bamiekumo Peremoboere, Oyindamola Agbabiaka Comfort, and Felicia Chinwe, "Geospatial Mapping and Monitoring of Sandbars in the Forcados River: Implications for Sustainable Blue Economy in the Niger Delta," *Journal of Geography, Environment and Earth Science International* 29, no. 8 (2025): 106-27.

agricultural produce, palm oil, timber, and mineral resources transported from interior regions through the River Benue and its tributaries.¹⁷ The navigability of these waterways facilitated sustained economic exchange and reinforced Forcados' role as a logistical hub within colonial commercial infrastructure. As a result, architectural development in the settlement prioritised port facilities, storage complexes, transit points, and administrative compounds designed to regulate flows of goods and labour.¹⁸

Early Portuguese structures in Forcados and surrounding settlements were characterised by lightweight construction systems using timber frames, wooden planks, and corrugated metal sheets.¹⁹ These materials were easily transported, rapidly assembled, and responsive to the humid coastal climate.²⁰ Portuguese architectural practices reflected a pragmatic approach to settlement formation, emphasising flexibility and mobility over permanence. Buildings functioned primarily as trading depots, residences for merchants, and provisional storage units, often rebuilt or relocated in response to environmental degradation or political instability. Such structures maintained close relationships with indigenous building traditions, incorporating local craftsmanship and environmental knowledge.

By contrast, British colonial architecture introduced a more monumental and permanent aesthetic rooted in brick masonry, stone foundations, and imported construction technologies. This transformation coincided with the consolidation of British commercial power through the activities of the Royal British Company, later reorganised as the United Africa Company (UAC).²¹ Following European territorial negotiations and imperial partition agreements, British firms expanded infrastructural investments from the late eighteenth century onwards, marginalising Portuguese influence in Nigerian coastal settlements.²² Brick-built warehouses, customs houses, residential quarters, and administrative offices symbolised political authority and economic dominance, projecting stability and permanence within volatile trading



Figure 5. Apartments occupied by the British colonial masters. in Forcados. Authors' fieldwork, 2025.



Figure 6. Fence structure of the apartment buildings. Authors' fieldwork, 2025.

environments.

The spatial organisation of Forcados under British administration reflected systematic hierarchies of race, labour, and authority. Cemeteries, hospitals, schools, prisons, and residential quarters were strategically zoned to separate European officials from African workers and traders. Colonial residences occupied elevated or well-drained sites, while labour settlements were relegated to flood-prone and environmentally vulnerable zones. Prisons and detention facilities were positioned near commercial and administrative centres, reinforcing surveillance and disciplinary control. These spatial arrangements institutionalised social inequalities within the physical fabric of the settlement.²³

Contemporary field observations indicate that many of these colonial-era structures now exist in advanced states of neglect. Former hospitals, schools,

17. Muhammad Bello, and Usman Isah Ya'u, "From The Gongola to The Forcados: Colonial Water Transport and Economic Development In Nigeria," *Àgídígbo* 12, no. 2 (2024): 489–500.

18. Jackson et al., *Architecture, Empire, and Trade*.

19. Branco, "Portuguese Traditional Timber".

20. Konstantin Petoukhov, "They Just Let Us Rot to Death:" Anti-Colonialism, Contestation, and Resistance to Reparations for Indian Residential School Abuse." *Social & Legal Studies* 32, no. 5 (2023): 737–755.

21. Jackson et al., *Architecture, Empire, and Trade*.

22. Fassil Demissie, ed., *Colonial Architecture and Urbanism in Africa* (Routledge, 2016).

23. Viviane Saleh-Hanna, *Colonial Systems of Control: Criminal Justice in Nigeria* (University of Ottawa Press, 2008).

cemeteries, and administrative buildings are largely overgrown by vegetation, structurally compromised, and disconnected from present development initiatives. Despite their historical significance, limited conservation frameworks and infrastructural investment have contributed to their gradual disappearance. The deterioration of these sites reflects broader patterns of postcolonial marginalisation and environmental vulnerability within the Niger Delta.

Waterways remained central to Forcados' architectural and economic identity throughout the colonial period. Navigable routes extending from the coast through the Niger and Benue river systems facilitated commercial exchange with northern regions, including present-day Gongola and adjoining territories.²⁴ These river corridors supported the movement of agricultural commodities, labourers, and administrative personnel, reinforcing Forcados' role as a nodal point within imperial logistics networks. Port infrastructure, docking facilities, and riverine warehouses were therefore prioritised within urban planning strategies. The spatial integration of maritime and terrestrial transport systems enhanced colonial extraction capacities while simultaneously intensifying labour exploitation and environmental degradation.

Scholars increasingly emphasise that colonial landscapes such as Forcados should be understood as assemblages of political power, material technologies, and labour regimes rather than as passive backdrops to economic activity. The juxtaposition of Portuguese provisional structures and British monumental architecture illustrates competing colonial ideologies of mobility and permanence. Together, these architectural layers reveal how spatial forms were mobilised to legitimise imperial authority, regulate African labour, and stabilise extractive economies. Forcados thus exemplifies how colonial architecture operated simultaneously as infrastructure, symbol, and instrument of domination within West African coastal environments.²⁵

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative and interdisciplinary research design to examine the relationship between slavery, labour systems, and colonial architectural production in Forcados. The methodological framework integrates historical analysis, spatial documentation, and visual interpretation to reconstruct the material and social conditions embedded within

colonial-era structures.²⁶ By combining multiple forms of evidence, the research ensures analytical depth, contextual accuracy, and methodological triangulation. A comprehensive review of scholarly literature on colonial architecture, labour history, heritage studies, and postcolonial theory provides the conceptual foundation for the study. Academic journals, monographs, institutional publications, and conference proceedings are critically examined to identify prevailing interpretative frameworks and unresolved debates concerning colonial-built environments. This review supports the analysis of architecture as a labour-intensive and politically situated practice shaped by systems of coercion and extraction. Museum collections and exhibition catalogues documenting colonial material culture in southern Nigeria are analysed to supplement the limited availability of formal archival records.²⁷ These sources offer visual and descriptive evidence of architectural fragments, construction tools, trade artefacts, and settlement layouts associated with Forcados and comparable coastal sites. Such materials contribute to the reconstruction of historical building practices and infrastructural organisation. Oral documentary sources constitute a central component of the research approach.²⁸ Semi-structured interviews with community elders, local historians, heritage practitioners, and long-term residents provide insights into labour relations, spatial use, and social hierarchies that remain insufficiently documented in written sources. Oral testimonies are critically assessed through cross-referencing with published scholarship and field observations to ensure reliability and contextual coherence.²⁹ Fieldwork-based investigation forms the empirical core of the study. Repeated site visits to

26. Yousaf, *Examining Slavery's Architectural Finishes*.

27. Critchley, "Infrastructural Narratives".

28. John Goodwin, *Sage Research Methods - SAGE Biographical Research* (Sage Publishing, 2025).

29. Lucas and Strain, "Keeping the Conversation".

24. Bello and Ya'u, "From The Gongola to The Forcados".

25. Edmund Abaka, and George Xorse Kumasenu, "Slavery, Remembrance, and Sites of Historical Memory: The Case of Badagry," *African Economic History* 49, no. 1 (2021): 104–26.



Figure 7. Current state of the apartment buildings in Forcados Authors' fieldwork, 2025.

Forcados enable systematic documentation of surviving colonial structures, infrastructural remains, and degraded landscapes. Photographic surveys, measured sketches, and spatial mapping techniques are employed to record building dimensions, material conditions, and site relationships.³⁰ Observational data focus on ports, warehouses, prisons, residential quarters, cemeteries, and transport corridors, as well as on environmental factors such as erosion, flooding, and vegetation encroachment that affect heritage conservation. Architectural visual storytelling is employed as an interpretative method for translating spatial evidence into coherent analytical narratives. Through the integration of photographs, annotated drawings, diagrammatic representations, and sequential visual narratives, the study reconstructs labour processes, movement patterns, and power relations embedded within the built environment. Visual materials function not merely as illustrations but as analytical instruments that support historical interpretation and critical reflection. Data analysis follows a thematic and comparative framework. Qualitative materials derived from literature, museum sources, oral accounts, and field documentation are systematically coded according to recurrent themes, including labour organisation, spatial segregation, material hierarchies, and heritage neglect. Comparative reference to established slave sites such as Badagry facilitates the identification of both site-specific and regional patterns of colonial spatial production. Ethical principles guide all stages of research engagement. Informed consent is obtained from interview participants, and culturally sensitive narratives are handled with respect for community perspectives and historical trauma. The research prioritises collaborative engagement and transparent documentation to avoid extractive knowledge practices. Through the integration of documentary research, oral history, field-based observation, and visual analysis, this methodological approach enables a multi-layered reconstruction of colonial architectural production in Forcados. This synthesis supports the recovery of marginalised labour histories and contributes to critical debates on postcolonial heritage, memory, and spatial justice

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study reveal that colonial architectural production in Forcados was fundamentally shaped by systems of coerced and subordinated labour, which structured both material practices and spatial organisation. Field observations, oral testimonies, and visual documentation indicate that major infrastructural elements, including ports, warehouses, detention facilities, residential quarters, and transport corridors, were constructed and maintained primarily through African labour operating under conditions of economic compulsion and social

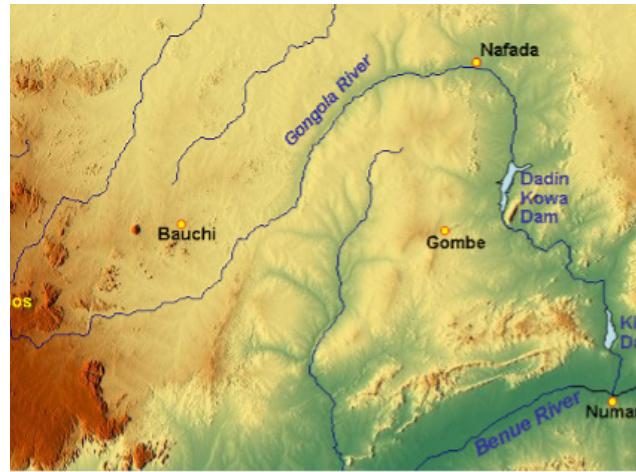


Figure 8. Gongola River and its connection to River Benue and Niger which also connects to Forcados showing Trading sea route connections between Forcados south and the Northern part of Nigeria at the time.

subordination. These labour regimes were embedded within broader imperial systems of commercial extraction and administrative control, transforming the built environment into a material expression of colonial domination. Architectural analysis demonstrates that spatial planning in Forcados consistently reinforced racial and occupational hierarchies, with European commercial agents and administrators occupying elevated, well-drained, and strategically positioned zones characterised by durable construction materials and access to infrastructural services, while African workers were confined to peripheral and environmentally vulnerable areas marked by temporary materials, inadequate sanitation, and limited spatial autonomy. This pattern reflects deliberate planning strategies designed to regulate mobility, visibility, and access to resources, institutionalising inequality within everyday landscapes and normalising social stratification through built form. The study further identifies a close relationship between architectural form and labour discipline, as prisons, holding facilities, and surveillance-oriented compounds were positioned near commercial and administrative centres, enabling continuous monitoring of workers and traders, while functioning symbolically as instruments of authority that reinforced obedience and compliance. Oral accounts emphasise the role of these structures in sustaining fear-based labour management systems and in regulating contractual, bonded, and enslaved populations. Material analysis indicates that building technologies in Forcados combined indigenous construction knowledge with imported colonial techniques, and although early structures relied heavily on timber, mud composites, and palm-based materials, later British buildings introduced brick masonry and reinforced foundations, African labour remained central to construction processes, including material sourcing, transportation, and on-site assembly. The invisibility of this labour within colonial documentation reflects broader epistemic

30. Goodwin, *Sage Research Methods*.

practices that prioritised European agency while marginalising African contributions. Comparative analysis with Badagry highlights how differing economic orientations generated distinct architectural configurations, as Badagry developed extensive barracoon systems and export-oriented spatial layouts to accommodate large-scale human trafficking, while Forcados prioritised logistical, administrative, and commodity-processing infrastructures, yet both sites reproduced similar patterns of spatial exclusion, racialised labour control, and hierarchical residential zoning within shared ideological frameworks of imperial governance. Field documentation reveals extensive deterioration and abandonment of colonial-era structures in contemporary Forcados, where former hospitals, schools, warehouses, and cemeteries are frequently overgrown, structurally compromised, and disconnected from development initiatives, with environmental degradation, flooding, and industrial pollution further exacerbating heritage vulnerability. Community narratives indicate ambivalent relationships with these inherited landscapes, as some residents perceive colonial buildings as symbols of oppression and dispossession, while others regard them as potential resources for cultural recognition and economic revitalisation, yet the absence of comprehensive heritage frameworks has limited opportunities for collective engagement and reinterpretation. The application of architectural visual storytelling proved effective in translating fragmented material remains into coherent historical narratives, as visual reconstructions, annotated drawings, and spatial sequencing enabled the identification of labour pathways, surveillance zones, and hierarchical boundaries embedded within site layouts, facilitating critical engagement with spatial evidence and enhancing interpretative transparency. Overall, the findings demonstrate that colonial architecture in Forcados functioned as a mechanism of labour governance, economic extraction, and symbolic domination, supporting imperial commerce while naturalising systems of inequality through everyday spatial experience, and underscoring the necessity of historically informed and socially responsive approaches to heritage conservation and postcolonial urban development.

Conclusion

This study has examined the architectural landscapes of Forcados as material expressions of slavery, coerced labour, and colonial power, demonstrating that the settlement's-built environment emerged through systems of exploitation embedded within imperial commercial and administrative networks. By integrating literature analysis, museum-based evidence, oral documentary sources, fieldwork documentation, and architectural visual storytelling, the research has reconstructed how ports, warehouses, prisons, residential quarters, cemeteries, and transport infrastructures were produced and maintained through

subordinated African labour. The findings reveal that spatial planning consistently reinforced racial and occupational hierarchies, naturalising inequality through differentiated access to land, materials, and services, while architectural forms functioned as instruments of surveillance, discipline, and economic extraction. Comparative analysis with Badagry has further illustrated how varying colonial economic orientations generated distinct spatial configurations within shared ideological frameworks of domination. The deterioration and marginalisation of colonial-era structures in contemporary Forcados reflect ongoing processes of historical erasure, environmental vulnerability, and institutional neglect, limiting opportunities for critical engagement and heritage-based development. At the same time, community narratives indicate the continued relevance of these spaces as sites of contested memory and potential cultural renewal. By foregrounding labour as a central analytical lens, this study challenges Eurocentric narratives that attribute colonial development primarily to technological and administrative expertise, instead emphasising African agency, knowledge, and endurance within oppressive systems. The research contributes to broader debates on coloniality, heritage ethics, and spatial justice by demonstrating the necessity of historically grounded and socially responsive preservation strategies. Ultimately, recognising colonial architecture as a repository of exploitation and resilience offers a foundation for more inclusive approaches to heritage practice and urban transformation in postcolonial societies, enabling built environments such as Forcados to be reinterpreted not merely as remnants of empire but as critical resources for historical accountability and collective reimagining.

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