

GHANA

Franklin Lodge – Ussher Town, Accra

As a result of the increased trans-Atlantic slave trade, the Portuguese constructed this building in 1600 as a slave house to augment the holding capacity of other slave posts.

The structure is of the Renaissance style, reflected in the charm and romance of its character. It consists of a two-storey block, flanked on the north and east by single-storey structures and incorporating a large courtyard. The ground floor of the two-storey block has very robust walls and an arcaded frontage. The house had a dungeon under the two-storey block with a passage leading to a loading area at the Southern end – the less romantic relics and other evidence of the slave trade.

This historic building is at risk, facing major threats to its structure from:

- the tropical maritime climate i.e. strong winds, heavy rainfalls and corrosive salt-laden atmosphere;
- encroachment by the sea (sea erosion).

Combined with the lack of regular maintenance, climatic impacts and sea erosion are the primary causes of the deterioration of the physical fabric of the building.

The Ghana Museums and Monuments Board, the heritage institution responsible for preservation of Cultural Heritage in the



Franklin lodge, main façade

country, in collaboration with UNESCO, is putting forward a proposal for the restoration of this monument that will include converting part of the structure into a historical museum. Adequate financial resources will have to be mobilised in order to achieve this goal.

Tenzuk Tallensi Settlements

Located only 10 miles from Bolgatanga are the Tong Hills, which harbour the unique cultural landscape of Tongo-Tenzuk. The area is of outstanding natural beauty and cultural richness. With their wondrous rock formations, caves and natural rock shelters, the hills are the sacred epicenter of the Talensi, an ethnic group in northern Ghana. Over the generations, through work and play, in building activities and rituals, the Talensi at Tongo-Tenzuk have managed to master their unique environment.

The environmental mastery has come through effective use of land for buildings, agriculture (which engages about 98% of the population) and shrines. The local architecture blends seamlessly into the natural environment, while also creating human order within nature. The design and placement of structures has served the social needs of the community for centuries, and has been carefully preserved through tradition. The houses mirror the social and ideological relationship among the Talensi. The footpaths, the shaded spaces, the shrine groves, cattle kraals and granaries, reflect the cosmological system and socio-political structures. The numerous compounds, clustered among the rocks of the hills, produce a landscape of extraordinary beauty and tranquility that is typical of the interdependence of nature and culture, of humans and their environment. Retention of water for effective agricultural purposes is realised by careful rock terracing. The caves, rock boulders, rocky pavements and land serve as shrines and sacred groves of the community. Some rock areas are used for processing foods: thrashing and pounding or grinding grains and shea butter.

The Tenzuk cultural landscape is unique in that the ancient cultural practices of the people – such as intensive land-use, terracing and strict religious practices – have remained intact to date.

The site has been nominated (tentative) for listing as a World Heritage property. However, there is grave concern as recently the site has come under serious threat from the quarrying activities of contractors.

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