THE CLASSICAL REVIVAL IN ARCHITECTURE: INVIGORATING OR DEBILITATING IN NIGERIA

Abstract

This paper presents classical revival as one of the eclectic approaches to architectural design prevalent at the moment. It traces the evolution of classicism from ancient times to the present and holds that architects’ predilection for classical architecture, especially in Western countries, could be attributed to the desire for continuity and meaning in architecture. Traces of the classical revival going on in Nigeria at the moment are examined critically and it is subsequently argued that while the revival is invigorating mainly from the point of view of architectural dialectics, it is debilitating when examined in its content and context of usage. Consequently, it is suggested that the proliferation of historical architectural styles purely as a way of catching up with the West without in-depth studies of their relevance and propriety to the Nigerian environment should be checked. Such superficial and un-coordinated imitations of history would only give rise to a disquieting agglomeration in the character of our towns and cities. Pertinent recommendations aimed at genuine historical revival in particular and architectural development in general are advanced.