

**The Social Effects of the Built Environment:  
A Case Study of Selected Buildings in Benin City, Nigeria**

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**ABSTRACT** This paper examines the impact of the built environment on the pattern of social life of the home dweller. Housing and planning rest on the premise that by the manipulation of the physical environment we can control social patterns. In general, it is said that architecture controls the environment in order to make interaction and collaboration possible. The paper attempts to assess this premise. In the context of architecture and city design, the physical environment is generally known as the built environment. The built environment simply refers to the buildings and spaces between them. The purpose of architecture is to give order to certain aspects of our environment. This implies that architecture controls or regulates the relations between man and his environment. It, therefore, participates in creating a meaningful frame for the activities of man. The paper posits that if housing exerts an independent influence on how we live, then the creation of certain housing conditions can change social relationship. We can affect the choice of friends, family adjustment, and generally how people spend their time. Different housing decisions may have different social consequences. This paper examines the various ways the manipulation of the environment could result to a better sustainable and environmentally conscious architecture. The paper recommends that architecture, as a human product should be used to order and improve our relations with the environments.