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# **Unveiling the Immaterial: The Premier Wooden Building Restoration Project at The Hope Waddell Institution, Calabar**

## **Abstract**

This paper examines the restoration and preservation of the Premier Building at the Hope Waddell Training Institution in Calabar, Nigeria, a significant colonial-era educational structure. The study actively integrates both tangible and intangible elements into the restoration process, considering historical, cultural, and environmental factors that shaped the building's original construction and its current restoration. This project critically evaluates the practical application of conservation principles like the Venice Charter (1964). While some aspects of the theoretical framework were successfully implemented, others remain a work in progress, revealing the complexities of balancing historical authenticity with modern needs. This study offers a critical reflection on heritage conservation within a postcolonial context, highlighting both the challenges and potential of restoring colonial buildings in Africa as part of a broader effort to reclaim and reinterpret these structures for contemporary use.

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## Introduction

The Premier Building holds a seminal position in Nigerian architectural history, particularly as a colonial-era educational facility that uniquely adapted imported prefabricated design to the tropical climate of Nigeria. Its assemblage in 1894, using materials like Scottish pine and corrugated iron roofing, exemplifies the colonial architectural trends of that era. Scholars such as Taylor (1996) have emphasised that such buildings serve as pivotal examples of how colonisers sought to imprint European architectural styles in African settings, blending functionality with cultural hegemony. This analysis situates the Premier Building as a crucial case study in the broader conversation about colonial architectural legacies across Africa.

The Premier Building spans 24 meters by 14 meters, standing prominently within the centre of the Hope Waddell Training Institution (H.W.I.T) campus. It is built on a solid cement base, with two symmetrical staircases flanking its entrance. Historical photographs reveal that the building originally featured four staircases on both the east and west side entrances. These staircases provide access to the main upper level, which was supported by steel pillars—a recent intervention by the student alumni in their efforts to preserve the structure in 2018. The use of corrugated sheet for the roof, considered an advanced material at the time, enhanced the building's durability and ability to withstand the humid tropical climate. The upper floorboards, made from Scottish pine, offered both strength and aesthetic

appeal, aligning with the institution's vision of a modern and progressive educational facility. In this context, the restoration team incorporated significant historical insights from archival sources, including material from the Edinburgh University Archives. The archives housed the "Special Report by Deputies Dr. Laws and W. Risk Thomson" from 1894, which detailed the original construction plans and cultural intentions behind the building. This archival material provided a crucial foundation for aligning the restoration with the building's historical and cultural context, ensuring that the preservation efforts were not only technically accurate but also historically informed. Access to this material, obtained through a collaboration with Edinburgh University Archives, further enhanced the scholarly foundation of the restoration, demonstrating how archival research can actively shape the physical restoration of heritage sites.

This project sought to balance technical refurbishment with the preservation of intangible heritage elements such as community narratives and traditional practices. These intangible components are crucial for maintaining the Premier Building's historical and social significance, ensuring its continued relevance to the communities it serves. The architectural design of the building, characterised by its single-story structure, hipped ridge corrugated sheet roof, and encompassing veranda, reflects colonial architectural adaptations to the tropical climate of Nigeria (Petzet 2004; Jokilehto 1999). The NCMM catalogued the Premier Building as a testament to both architectural ingenuity and the educational legacy of

colonial rule, yet the previous lack of preservation plans allowed the structure to deteriorate significantly.

In response to this deterioration, the restoration team adopted a comprehensive approach that extended beyond mere technical repairs (Figure 1). It emphasised the integration of 'weightless' elements—such as community

narratives and cultural memories—into the restoration process, which are vital to preserving the building's cultural essence (Bouchenaki 2003; Silapacharanan 2008). This strategy aligns with contemporary heritage conservation practices, which call for the inclusion of environmental, spiritual, and cultural considerations to ensure holistic restoration (Rebec et al. 2022).



**Figure 1: Dilapidated state of the Premier Building in 2022. Photo taken by author.**





The paper not only acknowledges the state of disrepair the Premier Building reached but also delves into the reasons behind its abandonment (Figure 1). A combination of shifting educational priorities, economic challenges, and the development of new facilities on the campus led to the building's gradual neglect. For instance, over the 130 years of the Hope Waddell Training Institution's evolution, several new buildings were constructed, including the Duke Town School Building (1899), Jubilee Building (1924), Science Building (1950), and Assembly Hall (1960), each reflecting the institution's changing needs and architectural trends (Figure 2). The rise of these newer facilities, constructed with materials like concrete and earth bricks, diminished the Premier Building's role on campus, rendering it a more peripheral structure by the early 2000s.

Despite this decline, the recent restoration project marked a critical turning point. The building's new role as a multifunctional space reflects both a commitment to heritage preservation and a vision for its future relevance. The restoration plan includes a "Hall of Architectural Evolution," showcasing the rich history of the institution's buildings and the architectural styles that have shaped its campus over the years. Additionally, the building will feature a "Wall of Fame," dedicated to honouring past principals and notable alumni who have significantly contributed to the institution and broader society.

The restoration project is not just about preserving the Premier Building as a physical structure; it is about reinvigorating its role within the broader cultural landscape of

Calabar, ensuring that it continues to serve as a living testament to the historical and cultural evolution of the Hope Waddell Training Institution. Access to crucial materials from the Edinburgh University Archives played a key role in ensuring that the restoration was not only faithful to the building's historical context but also aligned with contemporary principles of heritage conservation, highlighting the interdisciplinary and international collaboration that underpinned the project.

### **Project significance: an educational legacy in prefabricated architecture**

The Premier Building at Hope Waddell Training Institution, now 130 years old, stands as a vital representation of colonial architecture, serving as one of the earliest one-story educational structures established by early missionaries in Eastern Nigeria. This prefabricated Scottish Beach House, originally designed and constructed by a Glaswegian firm, exemplifies the early architectural efforts aimed at establishing a post-elementary educational infrastructure in the region. The building, characterised by its corrugated iron sheet roof and Scottish pine walls, was assembled in Calabar at a cost of £1,200 (Taylor 1996).

The significance of the Premier Building extends beyond its physical structure, as it represents the strategic use of prefabricated construction in addressing

the architectural needs of remote and developing regions. This building not only reshaped the built environment in Africa but also symbolised the broader colonial project of imposing European norms and practices. This analysis situates the Premier Building as a crucial case study in understanding the role of prefabricated construction in the colonial era and its lasting impact on the architectural heritage of Africa. Moreover, the historical context of the Hope Waddell Training Institution further emphasises the importance of this building. Established with the support of local leaders like King Eyamba V of Duke Town, who donated the land in 1846, the

institution was envisioned as a centre for industrial and technical education, as emphasised by figures such as Mary Slessor and Dr Laws (Kalu 1996). The institution's development, including the construction of the Premier Building, reflects the interplay between local and colonial forces in shaping the educational landscape of the region. The building's role in housing Nigeria's first printing press machine and its connection to notable figures in Nigerian history further enhance its historic value, making it a landmark of both educational and cultural significance in Nigeria.



**Figure 3: This image collage features close-up views of an old Heidelberg printing press machine, a historical artifact located in the Premier Building at the Hope Waddell Training Institution in Calabar, Nigeria. The various angles showcase the intricate mechanical components of the press, reflecting its industrial craftsmanship and the robust engineering typical of early 20th-century printing technology. Photos taken by Author in 2022.**

## **Context and background: integrating cultural heritage with conservation principles**

The restoration of the Premier Building within this historic complex was not merely a technical undertaking; rather, it was a project deeply rooted in educational and historical considerations, with a strong emphasis on preserving the authenticity and integrity of cultural heritage (Petzet 2004; Jokilehto 1999). In the context of the Hope Waddell Training Institution, these principles were meticulously applied throughout the restoration process.

While the Venice Charter (1964) advocates for preserving historical authenticity, the Premier Building's restoration faced practical challenges. Due to the unavailability of original prefabricated materials, the team employed local timbers such as Black Alfar and Teak. This decision was not an attempt to replicate the coloniser's intentions but rather a necessary intervention to ensure the building's structural longevity. As Goetcheus and Mitchell (2014) argue, conservation efforts must sometimes adapt to local circumstances, particularly when original materials are unavailable. Thus, the use of local materials reflected an integration of traditional craftsmanship with modern restoration needs, aligning with the Venice Charter's principle of minimal intervention while maintaining the building's historical integrity (Article 9, Venice Charter). The restoration also involved a careful consideration of both traditional and modern roofing techniques, reflecting a broader philosophical

commitment to balancing historical integrity with contemporary needs. This balance is central to the principles of the Venice Charter, which advocates for the preservation of a site's authenticity while allowing for necessary interventions that ensure its continued relevance and functionality. Historically, the Premier Building's original roof was constructed using corrugated iron sheets—a material chosen for its durability and ease of installation, particularly in the colonial context where prefabricated materials were favoured for their practicality. However, this choice was also emblematic of the broader colonial strategy of imposing European architectural standards on African landscapes, often without regard to local environmental conditions or traditional building practices.

The decision to retain the use of corrugated iron for the roof was not made lightly. Philosophically, this choice was driven by a desire to preserve the building's historical character, aligning with the Venice Charter's principle of minimal intervention. Retaining the original roofing material was seen as essential to maintaining the building's visual and structural integrity, ensuring that it continued to convey its historical narrative authentically. However, the restoration team also recognised the limitations of the original roofing system, particularly in the context of Calabar's humid tropical climate, where traditional roofing materials such as thatch or palm fronds were historically favoured for their superior thermal insulation and water-shedding properties. To address these climatic challenges while respecting the building's historical fabric, the restoration

incorporated modern techniques to enhance the performance of the corrugated iron roof.

This included the addition of a felt underlay beneath the corrugated sheets, a technique that improves thermal insulation and reduces heat gain—thereby making the interior spaces more comfortable in Calabar’s hot and humid environment. This intervention is philosophically aligned with the Venice Charter’s allowance for modern materials and techniques when necessary to preserve a monument’s functionality and ensure its continued use. The restoration project

engaged local artisans to implement these roofing enhancements, thereby integrating traditional craftsmanship into the process (see fig. 4). This approach reflects a philosophical commitment to respecting and revitalizing local building practices, which aligns with the Charter’s emphasis on involving local communities in conservation efforts. By combining traditional methods with modern improvements, the project aimed to create a roof system that not only preserves the building’s historical appearance but also meets contemporary standards of comfort and durability. The strategic use of both traditional and modern roofing



**Figure 4: The artisans working on the felt underlay in the roof of the Premier Building. Photo taken by the author, 2023**



techniques in the Premier Building's restoration exemplifies a nuanced application of conservation philosophy. It demonstrates how the principles of minimal intervention, authenticity, and community involvement can be practically applied to achieve a balance between preserving historical integrity and adapting to present-day needs. This choice ensured that the building retained its historical character, allowing it to continue narrating its past (Taylor 1996).

The team embodied the Charter's call for the involvement of the local community and the inclusion of their knowledge and traditions in the conservation process. The restoration of the Premier Building was conducted in close consultation with local artisans, historians, *alunmi* and community members. Their input was critical in ensuring that the restoration was not only technically sound but also culturally sensitive, aligning with local practices and values. This participatory approach fostered a sense of ownership and pride within the community, reinforcing the building's role as a living component of Calabar's heritage (de la Torre 2013).

The restoration team also integrated the Venice Charter's emphasis on conserving the historical and cultural context of the building. The Premier Building was approached not as an isolated artifact but as part of the broader historical and cultural landscape of Calabar. The restoration team made deliberate efforts to preserve the building's relationship with its surrounding environment, considering factors such as its spatial orientation, visual connections with other historical structures, and its

significance in the community's collective memory (Taylor 1996; Biggs 2021). The Calabar tourist board has now included the Premier Building as part of their tour schedules.

By applying these principles, the restoration of the Hope Waddell Institution's Premier Building was not only a technical achievement but also a culturally and historically informed endeavour. The project serves as a model for how the Venice Charter can be effectively applied to conserve historical monuments, honouring their past while ensuring their continued relevance for future generations. Through this restoration, the Hope Waddell Training Institution continues to symbolise Calabar's rich educational and cultural heritage, bridging the historical past with both the present and future (Petzet 2004; de la Torre 2013).

## Materials and methods

### (a) Methodological approach

In this study, the team employed an inter/multi/transdisciplinary methodology that integrated site plans, archival research, community narratives, and traditional use restorative analysis. This methodology was critical to achieving a comprehensive understanding of the Premier Building's history, its continued usage, and its cultural significance.

By adopting this approach, the team ensured that both the tangible and intangible aspects of the building's heritage were uncovered and preserved, aligning with the broader goals of the restoration project outlined by Laotan-Brown et al. (2024) in the HWTI restoration manual.

### (b) Site plans & archival research

Archival research played a pivotal role in this project, with comprehensive investigations conducted across multiple repositories to ensure a thorough understanding of the building's historical significance. Key sources were drawn from the Hope Waddell Training Institution Archives, which provided invaluable records and documents specific to the institution's operations and architectural evolution.

The Calabar Museum Archives offered crucial local historical maps, photographs, and documents that enriched the contextual understanding of the Premier Building's role within the broader



**Figure 5:** This image collage presents a visual narrative centred around the Hope Waddell Training Institution, combining historical documentation with contemporary restoration efforts. The collage is divided into sections that showcase archival materials, ongoing restoration activities, and discussions among stakeholders, alumni and community members. Photos taken by Author in 2022/2023 and collage created by Author in 2024.

Calabar region (Figure. 2). Of particular importance was the material housed at the Edinburgh University Archives. These archives contained essential documents related to the Presbyterian missionaries who founded the institution, including the Special Report by Deputies Dr. Laws and W. Risk Thomson from 1894, which detailed original construction plans, correspondences, and reports. These documents provided valuable insights into the intentions of the early builders and the missionary agenda, which shaped the architectural and educational landscape of the institution.

The British colonial records, accessed through national repositories, further supplemented these findings with broader administrative documents, such as original commissioning reports and approvals for the building's construction. Together, these archives—including the critical material from the Edinburgh University Archives—offered a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the Premier Building's original construction, its historical usage, and the broader socio-cultural and political factors that influenced its development (Laws & Thompson 1894). The integration of these archival sources significantly enriched the restoration project, ensuring that both the tangible and intangible aspects of the building's history were preserved.

### **(c) Alunmi and community narratives**

Gathering oral histories and personal

stories through interviews, focus groups, and meetings with alumni and the community were central to capturing the intangible heritage associated with the Premier Building. This participatory approach not only ensured that the restoration reflected the community's collective memory and identity but also documented the cultural significance and everyday experiences tied to the building (figure 5). This method aligns with the principles of community engagement highlighted by the project team in the H.W.T.I Manual.

### **(d) Traditional use restorative analysis: integrating vernacular craftsmanship in restoration**

The analysis of the Premier Building's traditional uses and materials was grounded in a comprehensive study of local craftsmanship and cultural practices, with a particular focus on integrating vernacular architectural techniques from Old Calabar. This approach involved material analysis, architectural surveys, and direct consultations with local artisans to ensure that traditional methods and materials were thoughtfully incorporated into the restoration process. One of the key references for the restoration work was the architectural techniques used in the construction of Efik traditional canoe houses in Old Calabar. In Old Calabar, the Ekpe Society played a central role in managing community affairs, highlighting a complex societal structure driven by economic activities that gave rise to the canoe house system. The wealth

and prosperity of a lineage house were symbolised by the number of canoes owned by its compound. Calabar's patrilineal lineage system traces descent and inheritance through the male line. Each lineage, connected to a common ancestor, is led by a chief or headman and serves as a vital social and political unit, shaping land ownership, matrimonial alliances, and conflict resolution. These vernacular structures, known for their resilience and adaptability to the local environment, provided crucial insights into how to maintain the cultural and environmental integrity of the Premier Building. The canoe houses, constructed using locally sourced woods and designed to withstand the humid tropical climate, embody a deep understanding of material properties and environmental conditions that has been passed down through generations.

In the architectural design of traditional Efik dwellings, a veranda often occupied the front part of the structure, serving as a transitional space between the exterior and the interior. Central to these homes, a large door situated at the back of the veranda led directly into the main interiors. In fully developed plans, this central room often functioned as a family shrine, a sacred space for rituals and ancestral veneration. Another notable feature of these Efik-evolved compositions was the inclusion of a row of first-floor bedrooms, an architectural element that, while present in other regions of Arochukwu, was particularly refined in Ibibio and Efik regions. In these more opulent dwellings, the bedrooms were directly connected to the veranda, enhancing the flow and

accessibility of the interior spaces. These bedrooms often featured wooden shutters overlooking the veranda, or in some cases, a balcony that extended over the entire width of the veranda, offering both privacy and a commanding view of the space below.

The restoration team drew on these examples by adopting similar principles in the selection and treatment of materials. For instance, the traditional method of using hardwoods like Black Alfar and Teak, which are resistant to rot and termite damage, was applied to reinforce the building's structural elements. This choice not only ensured the longevity of the restored building but also honoured the local craftsmanship that has historically shaped the built environment of Old Calabar. Moreover, the architectural design of the canoe houses, characterised by their elevated platforms and steeply pitched bases, informed the restoration strategies for managing moisture and heat within the Premier Building. These vernacular design features, which are tailored to the region's climatic conditions, were adapted to enhance the building's environmental performance while preserving its historical authenticity. For example, the incorporation of traditional joinery techniques, such as mortise and tenon joints, allowed for the seamless integration of old and new materials, maintaining the building's structural coherence.



## **Discussion and analysis: the interplay of heritage, community, and environmental adaptation**

Preserving and adaptively reusing historical buildings is crucial for safeguarding cultural heritage while simultaneously addressing contemporary needs, as Kumar and Janardhan (2023) emphasise. Heritage buildings, according to Djabarouti (2020), are socio-material hybrids that encompass both tangible and intangible elements, which are integral to their significance. The concept of heritage, therefore, extends beyond mere physical structures, encompassing intangible elements like values, traditions, and practices that shape community identity (Harrington 2004). Zubir and Sulaiman (2004) argue that urban cultural heritage is shaped by socio-economic, technological, and political factors, all of which influence the built environment. Understanding community values and attachments is essential for meaningful heritage preservation and for fostering community participation in such projects (Harrington 2004).

The restoration of the Premier Building vividly illustrates the intricate relationship between architectural design and its sociocultural environment, particularly within the historical context of Calabar, Nigeria. This restoration process provides an in-depth analysis of how historical and cultural factors are intricately woven into architectural design, showcasing a deep understanding of local environmental conditions, social needs, and aesthetic preferences, as highlighted by Laotan-Brown et al. (2024). In the Premier

Building's architectural design and environmental adaptation, strategic decisions demonstrate a keen awareness of the tropical climate. The placement of the structure at the site's highest point was not only to maximise natural light and ventilation—crucial for passive cooling in the region's humid conditions—but also to implement early environmental design principles. The building's ample floor-to-ceiling height further enhances this cooling approach, reflecting a sophisticated understanding of climate-responsive architecture. The design, featuring windows placed high above the floor level, balances the need for privacy with the goal of minimizing heat gain from direct sunlight, demonstrating a nuanced comprehension of both the building's functional needs and the occupants' well-being. The strategic arrangement of doors facilitates effective circulation and aesthetic harmony, aligning with valued principles of symmetry. Ventilation, a critical aspect of the building's design, is addressed through features such as clearstory windows with wired iron mesh, effectively venting hot air and maintaining a cooler environment in functional spaces. The choice of corrugated iron and felt for roofing materials responds directly to the climatic demands of the area, ensuring the building's resilience against the elements. The historical context of the Premier Building and its material choices reveal that designers can adapt local resources to reflect the socio-economic realities of their environment. The restoration included pragmatic solutions like drains and raised floors to combat the prevalent flood risks, showcasing a proactive and resourceful approach to the region's

environmental challenges.

The cultural and historical legacy of the Premier Building is deeply embedded in its strategic location, representing a historical nexus where local traditions and external influences intersected to shape Calabar's architectural and urban development narrative. The land, originally donated by King Eyamba V and later expanded by colonial administrator Claude Macdonald, encapsulates the complex relationships between traditional leaders, colonial entities, and missionary ambitions (Kalu 1996). This legacy is reflected in the site's strategic location, a historical confluence of influences that shaped the city's architectural narrative. The architectural features of the Premier Building offer valuable insights into the broader historical and cultural milieu of its era. The design intricacies serve as a tangible record of responses to environmental constraints, resource availability, and cultural interplay. The traditional knowledge and practices that contribute to the intangible heritage of communities, as discussed by Bomi-Daniels (2022), parallel the architectural wisdom embedded in traditional building techniques. The ongoing restoration, which respects original conservation principles and maintains structural authenticity, ensures the building's continued relevance and usability. This analytical perspective not only deepens appreciation for the Premier Building's historical importance but also highlights the dynamic narrative of architectural evolution in Calabar, offering critical lessons on the intersection of colonial imposition, culture, climate, and construction technology in shaping built environments.

### **Findings and analyses: uncovering heritage through integrated restoration practices**

Our archival research and engagement with community narratives have unearthed previously hidden facets of the Premier Building's history. For instance, Mary Slessor's 1892 letter to the Foreign Mission Board provides crucial insights into the construction decisions and her advocacy for using indigenous materials (Proctor 2000; Odey & Onah 2019). This correspondence reveals Slessor's keen awareness of the mission's financial limitations and her strategic proposal to utilise local resources to significantly reduce costs. Her approach not only aimed at economic sustainability but also sought to embed cultural respect and local ownership within the project (Proctor 2000; Odey & Onah 2019). These findings emphasise the importance of incorporating community narratives and cultural memories into restoration processes, which enhances the cultural and historical authenticity of such projects. Slessor's letter demonstrates an early, progressive understanding of the value in employing local materials and practices, thereby fostering a sense of pride and ownership among the indigenous population. This approach contrasts sharply with the dominant colonial practices of the time, which often disregarded local cultures in favour of imposing foreign standards.

## **National agendas and restitution of colonial projects**

The restoration of the Premier Building at the Hope Waddell Training Institution is not just a localised architectural project; it is part of a broader national agenda in Nigeria that seeks to restitute and redefine colonial architecture within a postcolonial context. This approach is rooted in a desire to reclaim and reinterpret the colonial past, turning once-imposed structures into symbols of national pride and cultural resilience.

In recent years, there has been a growing movement in Nigeria and across Africa to restitute colonial architecture as part of a wider cultural and historical narrative that acknowledges both the challenges and the impacts of colonialism. This trend is evident in several national initiatives aimed at preserving and repurposing colonial-era buildings, turning them into museums, cultural centres, or educational facilities that serve contemporary needs while reclaiming their historical edifice.

For example, the transformation of the Old Residency in Calabar into the National Museum of Slave History represents a significant restitution of a colonial building. Originally constructed as a British administrative residence, the building has been repurposed to educate and inform the public about the transatlantic slave trade, offering a space for reflection on a dark chapter of history while asserting control over the narrative of Nigeria's past. This project, like the Premier Building restoration, aligns with

national efforts to reclaim colonial spaces and reframe them in a way that resonates with contemporary cultural and historical consciousness (Godlewski 2020).

The project also resonates with the ongoing discourse on postcolonial identity, where re-appropriating colonial architecture is seen as a way to assert cultural autonomy and redefine the built environment according to local values and priorities. In the context of the Premier Building, this restitution involves not only preserving the physical structure but also reintegrating it into the community's cultural fabric. The engagement of local artisans, the incorporation of traditional materials, and the emphasis on community narratives all reflect a deliberate effort to reclaim the building as part of Nigeria's living heritage, rather than a relic of colonial dominance. The restoration of the Premier Building is deeply embedded in national agendas that prioritise the restitution of colonial architecture as part of Nigeria's cultural and historical renaissance. It demonstrates how restoration projects can serve as powerful tools for reclaiming and redefining colonial edifices, transforming them into spaces that reflect and celebrate the nation's rich and complex identity. Through this project, the Premier Building not only regains its place in the architectural and educational history of Nigeria but also becomes a symbol of the country's ongoing journey towards cultural and historical self-determination.

## Conclusion: bridging past and present in architectural heritage



**Figure 6: Restored Premier Building. Photo taken by Author in 2024**

The restoration of the Premier Building not only preserved its physical structure but also highlighted the challenges inherent in integrating intangible cultural elements into a technically driven restoration. While the project was underpinned by strong philosophical principles, the practical application revealed the complexities of balancing historical accuracy with contemporary relevance. This illustrates the importance of ensuring that future heritage conservation projects integrate

both philosophical and practical considerations more fully, making restoration efforts both theoretically sound and practically viable.

The Edinburgh University Archives played a crucial role in deepening the understanding of the Premier Building's historical significance. The archives provided vital documents, including the "Special Report by Deputies Dr. Laws and W. Risk Thomson" (1894), which offered



insight into the original construction plans, the missionaries' intentions, and their broader impact on the architectural and educational landscape. The incorporation of this material not only enriched the historical context of the restoration but also ensured that the project aligned with the original vision of the building, while adapting it to contemporary needs.

The restoration of the Premier Building showcases how a balanced approach to heritage conservation can achieve the dual goals of preservation and modernisation,

ensuring that historical buildings continue to serve their communities in meaningful ways. As the field of heritage conservation evolves, there is a growing need for research and practice to further integrate immaterial aspects of cultural heritage, providing more concrete evidence and applications of these concepts. Continued exploration in this area will not only strengthen the framework for preserving architectural heritage but also deepen our understanding of the complex interplay between the tangible and intangible dimensions of cultural heritage.

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