

# THE CHANGING FACE OF COMPOUND HOUSES IN GHANA AND ITS EFFECT ON RENTAL VALUE: A CASE STUDY OF SELECTED NEIGHBORHOODS IN KUMASI, GHANA

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## Abstract

In compound houses in Ghana, tenants share basic facilities such as washrooms, kitchen and electricity meter. Most tenants have problems with queuing to use facilities and equal payment for utilities. Finding solution to these problems has resulted in emerging housing improvement trends on the rental market in Ghana. Results from 88 respondents indicated that this trend has resulted in increasing urban rental values. Landlords are improving the units in their compound houses because tenants find them more convenient and are ready to pay thrice more to live in one. Rent increment is sometimes based on the personal circumstances of landlords.

*Keywords:* Housing, Compound house, Self contained unit, Rental value, Kumasi, Ghana

## 1.0 Introduction

Undoubtedly, the compound house is one of the oldest forms of housing in Ghana. The concept of compound house has its antecedent dating far back into the early part of Ghana's civilization (Afram, 2007:13). Indeed, for over a century, majority of the population in Ghana have lived in compound houses (Tipple and Korboe, 1998). As far back as the 1960s, Hill (1966), cited in Korboe (1992) found that, most low-income Ghanaians lived in traditional compound houses. Today, statistics still have it that compound houses account for the majority of houses (51.5%) in Ghana (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). Typically known in the Akan parlance as *effiehyia* and described by Afram (2007) as 'Ghana's traditional house', compound house is a one-storey structure (sometimes multi-storey) with a square or rectangular open courtyard surrounded by a series of single and/or chamber and hall units (Sinai, 2001; Korboe, 1992). Apart from exclusive occupation of the unit, every other facility or space such

as toilet, kitchen (pato), drying lines, water, electricity and the open courtyard is shared by all households in the property.

Over the years, the sharing of common space and facility has been at the centre of many problems in compound houses in urban Ghana. Afram and Owusu (2006) found a number of tenants' complaints about the sharing of facility or space in a compound house. Firstly, they found that, most tenants had problem with the principle of equal sharing of electricity bills, especially where some households use more electrical gadgets than others. Secondly, tenants also complained vehemently about the long morning queues to toilet and bathroom facilities. Lastly, some tenants are forced to wash their clothes on weekdays to avoid the rush to dry clothes on drying lines on weekends. Consequently, Andreasen et al (2005) discovered that many tenants find the sharing culture in compound houses annoying, inconveniencing and difficult to cope with and therefore yearn to live a modern comfortable life.

In an attempt to find a lasting solution to the plight of tenants in compound houses and to make them comfortable, two emerging trends have been observed in the rental market. The commonest being where some landlords upgrade the existing ordinary units to self-contained units, while others construct entirely new houses of multiple-occupation where all units are self-contained. The trend of improving ordinary units (either a single room or a chamber and hall unit) into self-contained units (single room self-contained comprising a bedroom, kitchen, toilet, bathroom; or a chamber and hall self-contained comprising a bedroom, living room, kitchen, toilet, bathroom) respectively, shall be the focus of this study. In most cases, households in self-contained units share very little with others households within the same house. Nowadays, there is a growing preference for self-contained units in compound houses, particularly in urban areas. It, therefore, does not come as a surprise that virtually all new construction of houses in multiple-occupation have all their units being self-contained.

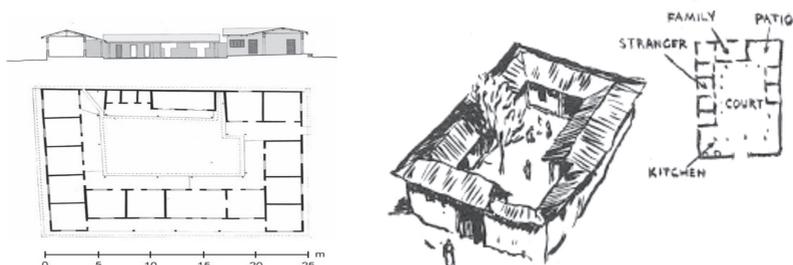
The phenomenon of improving ordinary units to self-contained units in compound houses has contributed to the increasing rental values in most urban areas. As of April 2014, self-contained units in compound houses within Kumasi commanded a rent of at least GHC150 per month (single room self-contained) or GHC200 per month (chamber and hall self-contained) depending on the location and constructional finishes. To make matters worse, to live in one of these self-contained units, prospective tenants must pay a 24-month advance rent. Having regard to the fact that 28 per cent of Ghanaians still live below the poverty line, it will not be an exaggeration to deduce that many low-income households cannot afford a 24-month advance rent of at least GHC3,600 for single room self-contained and GHC4,800 for chamber and hall self-contained. This suggests that these self-contained units can 'only' be afforded by people of a higher income group. This is the reason Arku et al. (2012) argues that compound house is becoming a main source of housing for all classes of people in society due to the limited supply of housing. In the same vein, Owusu (2011: 2) believes that the effect of liberalization and globalization have re-configured the housing supply and demand dynamics to the extent that increasing rental values are pushing middle income earners to settle for units in compound houses in urban areas.

In the past, there have been some studies on compound houses in Ghana. Andreasen et al (2005) discussed the merits and demerits of compound houses in Kumasi. Afram and Owusu (2006) observed tenants' way of life in multi-storey compound houses and recommended an archito-centric design that is sensitive to the needs of those who reside in them. Arslan (2011) argued that compound houses in Ayigya are insufficient in quantity and are poorly serviced and hence unsuitable for the changing demographics and values in the neighbourhood. Korboe (1992) predicted that it should not come as a surprise if some day modernization changes the face of compound houses in Ghana. Perhaps, the increasing numbers of self-contained units is a manifestation of modernity in compound houses predicted by Korboe (1992). Research on such modernity in compound houses is altogether lacking. This paper finds out the rate of improvement of units in compound houses in Kumasi. The paper also examines the factors that are responsible for the housing improvement trend in Kumasi and its effect on rental value. This paper argues that the paradigm shift from 'ordinary units with shared facilities' to 'self-contained units with minimal sharing' is changing the face of the traditional type of compound house in Ghana, the effect of which is evident in rental values of these units. The rest of the paper is organized as follow. Section two reviews literature on compound houses and the rental market in urban Ghana. Section three describes the research methodology. Section four presents and analyses the data gathered. The conclusion and recommendations are presented in Section five.

## 2.1 The Nature of Compound Houses in Ghana

Generally, a compound house is a single or multi-storey structure with suites of single-banked rooms (single, and chamber and hall units) that can be accessed from an unroofed square or rectangular courtyard (Awanyo, 2009). Figure 1 gives a good pictorial view of a typical compound house in Ghana. Where it is a multi-storey compound house, a staircase is provided in the courtyard to give access to the units on the upper floor(s). The single-banked form of compound house is one that can be found in most parts of Ghana, especially Berekum, Techiman and Dormaa in the Brong Ahafo Region as well as Kumasi, Agona and Kona in the Ashanti Region (Obeng-Odoom, 2009; Tipple et al., 1997a). However, Tipple et al (1997a) found that in some parts of Accra, there is a variation of the single-banked form. They noted that, similar to a typical Yoruba house in Nigeria, compound house form as found in parts of Accra is a single-storey (mostly) with suites of double-banked units at the front of the house with a courtyard at the back or rear. This type of compound house is what is popularly referred to as 'face me I face you'.

**Figure 1: Plan and Elevation of a Typical Single-Banked Compound House in Urban Ghana**



Source: *Andreasen et al. (2005)*

Compound houses are built in a square or rectangular shape with approximately 30m along each side or cover an area of about 100 and having an average of 10 – 15 rooms (Sinai, 2001; Tipple et al., 1997a). The number of rooms could be more in a multi-storey compound house. All the households that live in these rooms share common facilities and space. They share a common bath, toilet, drying lines, water taps, electricity and an open space or courtyard that is used for cooking, as children's playground and for family gatherings such as funeral or naming ceremonies (Awanyo, 2009; Mahama and Antwi, 2006). However, it must be noted that not all compound houses have all these common facilities. In some compound houses, water taps and toilet and bathing facilities are not provided. Where there is no tap in the house, households fetch water at common water points in the community. Where a toilet facility is not provided in the house, households have ideally resorted to nearby public toilet facilities but some go to the extent of defecating in open spaces, bushes or sometimes in plastic bags and thrown into gutters. Tipple et al. (1997a) found that, about one-third of compound houses in Kumasi and Berekum have no toilet facilities. In Accra alone, close to 3,528 compound houses have no toilets (Joy News, 2013). Boamah (2010) also observed that, 19.9% and 35.7% of compound houses in Kumasi and Tamale respectively do not have bathing facilities and consequently depend on open cubicles, open space and bathing facilities in other nearby houses. Despite the many persuasions and/or prosecution by the state, many landlords are still reluctant in providing these essential facilities.

Notwithstanding the unavailability of these facilities, most Ghanaian households still rent rooms in compound houses because they are not able to afford the plush apartments provided by private real estate developers in Ghana (Boamah, 2010). No wonder a number of studies have revealed that compound houses constitute the majority of housing in Ghana because the poor also constitute the majority of the Ghanaian populace (Gough and Yankson, 2011; Tipple et al., 1997a; Korboe, 1992). Per the 2000 Population and Housing Census, it was found that out of a total of 3,877,418 houses in Ghana, compound house comprised 46%, the highest of

all (Bank of Ghana, 2007). Ten years later, the 2010 Population and Housing Census revealed that compound represent 51.5% of a total of 5,817,607 houses in Ghana (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). Over the ten year period, the number of compound houses has increased by a considerable margin of 5.5% which means that, there has been an increase in the number of compound houses to satisfy the growing housing demand. However, Grant (2009) and Owusu (2011) have been quick to state that the percentage of compound houses has not always increased. In fact, he noted that the percentage of compound house in the total housing stock dropped by 20% with a significant increase in the number of the self-contained, semi-detached and detached housing types between 1990 and 2000.

It was during this same period (between 1990 and 2000) that many developing countries, including Ghana, implemented liberalization policies. Consequently, the housing sector experienced a change through the attraction of new foreign investment in real estate development and residential construction (Arku et al., 2012). Arguably, self-contained units began to dominate housing supply in the 1990s and gradually became the order of the day (Tipple and Korboe, 1998; Owusu, 2011). It is therefore not surprising that, put together, detached, semi-detached and apartments constituted 44% of the total housing in Ghana in the 2000 Population and Housing Census.

As the desire for self-contained units grew, landlords/private developers responded by either making some improvements to units in existing compound houses or to build new compound houses where each unit is self-contained. But even as improvements were made to some units in a compound house, some households in the same house continued to share facilities and space. Therefore, in many parts of Ghana today, there are many compound houses with self-contained units as well as other units sharing facilities and spaces. On the other hand, some landlords/developers who own lands in good locations have developed new compound houses where all units are self-contained. Some of the units are single room self-contained consisting of a bedroom with a toilet and bath facility and sometimes with a kitchen; others are chamber and hall self-contained comprising a bedroom, a living room, a kitchen and toilet and bathroom. Though there are a number of these new compound houses in Ghana, it seems not to have caught the eye of housing scholars. At best, some scholars have mentioned in passing, the reason for improvement of units in existing compound houses as well as construction of new compound houses.

## ***2.2 Factors Responsible for the Improvements and New Construction of Houses in Ghana***

Housing production can be increased by improving existing units or the construction of new houses (Garrod et al., 1995). This paper identifies some of the factors that influence this phenomenon. Firstly, Tipple and Korboe (1998) believe that the widening gap between population growth and housing supply is the main factor. Since independence, Ghana has experienced a rapid increase in population. Between 1960 and 2010, the population of Ghana increased from 6,726,815 to 24,658,823, representing about a 400 per cent increase (Ghana Statistical Service, n.d). Unfortunately, during the same period, housing supply could not also quadruple to keep pace with

the burgeoning population growth, thereby deteriorating Ghana's housing situation (Luginaah et al., 2010). As Arku (2009) has noted, about 60% of Ghanaians still have critical housing need. Secondly, a study by Yankson (2012) revealed that, these days, landlords make improvements, particularly by adding a living room, to existing units in compound houses or build new ones in order to take advantage of the changing market conditions in Ghana. Thirdly, Gosling et al. (1993: 1561) has also argued that housing market adjusts over time in response to changes in the prevailing economic conditions, personal and social circumstances. Some of these general conditions include the inflationary pressures; removal of subsidies on crude oil products; the poor performance of the cedi; and increasing cost of building materials which has resulted in high cost of maintenance of existing houses and construction of new houses (Arku et al, 2012).

In the face of the high housing shortage, landlords, faced with such general and personal conditions, have justified the need to adjust rental values of their properties to reflect current market prices, especially where there has been some improvement of units or construction of new houses. Interestingly, landlords who have neither carried out any improvement (including maintenance) of units nor built new houses have also increased rents. No wonder Arku et al (2012) found that a landlord's decision to revise rent may not necessarily be influenced by general market conditions but by his/ her financial circumstances.

### ***2.3 Who Lives in a Compound House?***

On the average, research seems to agree on the fact that compound house is the common form of housing for low-income Ghanaians because it is affordable (Korboe, 1992; Tipple and Korboe, 1998; Awanyo, 2009; Afram, 2007). Rents are low for compound houses because they are usually found in poor neighbourhoods characterized by deteriorating buildings, poor building plans, poor sanitation and drainage and inadequate maintenance among others. Example of such neighbourhoods include Moshie Zongo, Anloga and Akwatialine in Kumasi; Madina-Zongo, Nima, and Chorkor in Accra and; Changli, Nyohini and Dabbifong in Tamale (Awanyo, 2009; Boamah, 2010). However, this is not to conclude that compound houses can only be found in these poor neighbourhoods, neither is it to say that only the poor live in compound houses. Though, in times past, living in compound houses had been associated with low-income households, it is becoming the main source of housing for all income levels due to the limited housing supply (Arku et al., 2012). This is why there are a few compound houses even in the rich neighbourhoods such as East Legon, Achimota and Airport Residential in Accra; Ahodwo, Danyame and Nhyiaeso in Kumasi and; Norrip village, SSNIT and Jisonayili in Tamale. Whether located in a poor or rich neighbourhood, most compound houses accommodate landlords and rent paying tenants.

Apart from rent paying tenants, there are also the rent-free tenants. This group of tenants cannot go unnoticed as far as compound house is concerned because they constitute more than 31% of all urban residents, most of whom occupy rooms in compound houses (Ghana Statistical Service, 2008). Rent-free tenants constitute children, grandchildren and extended relatives of the landlord. As the name implies,

rent-free tenants do not pay rent because they are related to the owner of the compound house (Gough and Yankson, 2011; Tipple et al., 1997a). However, UN-Habitat (2010) has noted that rent-free tenants are not always relatives of landlords; even strangers live rent-free in compound houses. Unlike the rent paying tenants, for rent-free tenants, not only do they not pay any rent but also occupy their units until they are ready to move out into their own.

Moreover, it is the presence of these rent-free tenants in a compound house that make housing scholars suggest that compound house is synonymous with family house (such as Gough and Yankson, 2011; Obeng-Odoom, 2009; Korboe, 1992). This assertion may derive from pre-colonial multi-habitation where men married more than one wife and each wife shared a room in a compound house with her children until they are old enough to move to their own houses. With the changing urban lifestyle, most compound houses have moved beyond being occupied by a landlord's close family to where it now accommodates tenants in addition (Andreasen et al, 2005). Therefore, it is no longer totally correct to argue that households who live in a compound house are related.

#### ***2.4 The Rental Market in Urban Ghana***

It is no longer in doubt that most urban dwellers in Ghana live in rented houses. According to Gough and Yankson (2011), rental is the common type of tenancy in urban Ghana. In Accra, for example, about 64% of households rent accommodation while about 75% of households in Kumasi live in rented units (Grant and Yankson, 2003; Tipple and Korboe, 1998). This notwithstanding, successive governments in Ghana have rarely recognized renting as a credible option for addressing the high housing deficit in the country (Tipple et al, 1997a). The closest and probably the 'only' government effort tailored at providing affordable rental housing for low and middle-income workers was the 2005 Affordable Housing Project (UN-Habitat, 2010). This project has failed to achieve its intended objective due to the lack of commitment by successive governments to complete the project.

Consequently, most of the rental units in urban Ghana are supplied by private landlord/ladies, making the informal sector the largest source of rental accommodation for existing residents who want to relocate and for migrants to urban centres (Arku et al, 2012). No wonder these private landlords feature as a key stakeholder in the structure of the rental housing market in Ghana. In Ghana, even though all house types provide some rental units, most of the rental units can be found the compound house. It must also be noted that the rent paid for a particular rental unit is determined by the house type, size of the unit, number of rooms, availability of amenities and location characteristics of the property and the type of building materials used (Arku et al, 2012). Rent per month is generally high in the country, especially in the major cities such as Accra, Kumasi and Tarkoradi among others.

Owners of rental units in urban areas make the situation worse as they are quick to demand payment of advance rent from prospective tenants. Usually the advance rent, as is the norm in Ghana today, is a lump-sum payment of rent for up to four (4) years. When tenants pay advance rent, they are absolved from monthly payment of

rent during the duration for which they have paid (Obeng-Odoom, 2010). Arku et al (2012) explains two reasons for the long period of advance rent. Landlords either use the lump-sums received for new developments or make alterations to existing properties. Interestingly, Tipple et al (1999: 264) have also found that some landlords are increasingly asking prospective tenants to either improve their units (or else advance the full construction capital), the cost of which is amortized against the monthly rent.

It must be stressed that this phenomenon of long periods of advance rent is in contradiction with the Section 25(5) of the Rent Act, 1963 (Act 220) as amended by Section 19(2) of Rent Control Law, 1986 (PNDC 138) which makes landlords liable to a fine should they demand rent advances of more than six months. Irrespective of the statutory bars, high rents and long periods of rent advance, rental accommodation is still in high demand due to the high housing deficit. To secure rental accommodation, most urban dwellers often rely on estate agents who have data on vacant rental units. The agents charge fees at about 10% of the rent advance.

### 3.1 Study Methodology

This paper employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches to understand the proliferation of self-contained units in compound houses in Kumasi and how it affects rental values. Kumasi was chosen as the study area because for about half a century, more than 50% of the residents of Kumasi have lived in compound house (Tipple et al, 1997b). Currently, the Ashanti region, whose capital is Kumasi, has the largest numerical share of compound houses in the Ghana; more than 52% of all houses in the region are compound houses (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). More to the point, majority of past studies on compound houses (such as Willis and Tipple, 1991; Afram, 2007; Afram and Owusu, 2006; Arslan, 2011; Korboe, 1992) were all conducted in Kumasi. Therefore, no other location in Ghana could have been more appropriate for a study of this kind.

Descriptive survey method was adopted to collect primary data from study respondents in three selected neighbourhoods, comprising Odenoho Kwadaso, Patase and Gyinyase, in Kumasi. These neighbourhoods were randomly selected from the lot, as many of them share similar characteristics. A combination of purposive, convenience and snowball sampling was adopted to select the respondents for this study. Landlords and tenants of self contained units in compound houses were selected to appreciate the reasons for tenants' preference for self-contained units in compound houses and the eagerness among landlords to improve units. We also selected estate agents/brokers in order to ascertain the rents vis-a-vis the demand for self-contained units in Kumasi. Semi-structured interview was handy in gathering the required data for this study. This data collection technique gave us a great deal of freedom to probe various areas and to raise specific queries during the course of the interview (Naoum, 2007).

A response rate of 89% was achieved. In all, eighty eight (88) respondents constituting fifty-six (56) tenants, twenty-three (23) landlords and nine (9) estate agents were interviewed for the study. In addition to the primary data, secondary data was gath-

ered by reviewing existing literature such as published materials in libraries, journal articles, research papers and unpublished thesis that hinge upon the theme of this study. Data collected were presented and analyzed using frequency distribution (tabulation), measurement of central tendency (mean), measurement of dispersion (standard deviation) and the relative importance index (RII). It has been argued in Tawil et al (2013) that mean and standard deviation alone are not reliable statistics for assessing overall ranking of attributes. They, therefore, suggested that the RII can be a good check because it gives a direct descriptive interpretation of the most critical factor(s). In this study, we used the three statistical tools to rank tenants' and landlords' reasons for the increasing number of self-contained units in compound houses in Kumasi. Respondents were asked to score the reasons on an ordinal or likert scale of 1 to 5 where '1' is strongly disagree, '2' is disagree, '3' is neutral, '4' is agree and '5' is strongly agree. Based on the various scores provided by each respondent, it was possible to analyze and rank them accordingly, as seen in Tables 3 and 4. These rankings made it possible to compare the relative importance of the reasons as perceived by the tenants and landlords (Megha and Rajiv, 2013).

$$\text{Mean} = \sum \frac{fx}{f}$$

$$\text{Standard Deviation} = \sqrt{\frac{\sum (X - \bar{X})^2}{N}}$$

$$\text{Relative Importance Index (RII)} = \frac{1n_1 + 2n_2 + 3n_3 + 4n_4 + 5n_5}{5(n_1 + n_2 + n_3 + n_4 + n_5)}$$

Where  $n_1$  = The number of respondents who answered 'strongly disagree'

$n_2$  = The number of respondents who answered 'disagree'

$n_3$  = The number of respondents who answered 'neutral'

$n_4$  = The number of respondents who answered 'agree'

$n_5$  = The number of respondents who answered 'strongly agree'

## 4.0 The Changing Face of Compound Houses and Its Effect on Rental Values in Kumasi

### 4.1 *General Characteristics of Respondents*

Table 1 below shows the characteristics of the sample for the study. In this section, the researchers drew on individual interviews with tenants, landlords and estate agents to examine the rate of improvement of units in compound houses in Kumasi and its effect on rental value. The findings are organized around the objectives and themes of this study. The researcher found that over 90 per cent of tenants (household heads) living in self-contained units in the selected neighbourhoods in Kumasi are aged at least 25 years old and are either employed or self-employed. Per their age and jobs, it can be concluded that most of these tenants are economically active with a few economically not active tenants. The Ghana Statistical Service (2012) define economically active persons as those who are in paid employment, self-employment or contributing family workers; who are not working but had jobs to return to; and who are unemployed. They added that economically not active persons are those who are unable to work due to age or ill-health. From the findings, the few tenants who are economically not active are also unemployed. By virtue of being economically active, tenants who fall into this category paid the rent for the self-contained unit they occupy; the rent of units occupied by economically not active persons was paid by economically active family members.

**Table 1: Characteristics of Sample Respondents**

CHARACTERISTIC	TENANTS			TOTAL(n=56)
	Neighbourhoods			
	Odencho Kwadaso (n=19)	Patase (n=19)	Gyinyase (n=18)	
<b>Age</b>				
25 – 35	10	9	9	28
36 – 46	7	4	3	14
47 – 57	1	5	4	10
58	1	1	2	4
<b>Profession</b>				
Public Servants	7	9	8	24
Civil Servants	4	3	4	11
Private Sector (services)	5	6	4	15
Private Sector (Self-employed)	3	1	2	6
	Landlords			Total (n=23)
<b>Ages</b>	(n=9)	(n=7)	(n=7)	
25 – 35	-	1	-	1
36 – 46	4	3	2	9
47 – 57	2	3	3	8
58	3	-	2	5
<b>Advance rent taken</b>				
6months	-	-	-	-
7months - 2 years	6	4	3	13
3 to 5 years	2	3	3	8
6 years	1	-	1	2
	Estate Agents			Total (n=9)
<b>Years of Experience</b>	(n=3)	(n=3)	(n=3)	
1 – 5 years	1	1	1	3
6 – 10 years	2	-	1	3
10 years	-	2	1	3

Source: Field Survey (July, 2014)

As seen in Table 1, most (50) of the tenants who live in self-contained units in compound houses are workers in paid-employment with only a few who are self-employed. Though the researcher could not ask of their monthly salary, it can be deduced that most of these workers fall within the middle class category. This is a confirmation of the argument by Arku et al (2012) that, due to the low housing supply by the state, the compound house is becoming the main source of housing for all classes of people in society. We interviewed experienced estate agents who have worked for quite a long period in the three (3) neighbourhoods under study. Six(6) out of Nine(9) estate agents interviewed for this study have at least six(6) years of experience in assisting tenants secure accommodation in these neighbourhoods. Landlords were also key respondents for this study. It was found that twenty two (22) out of twenty three (23) landlords were at least 36 years, with the majority of them being economically active. In most cases, the compound houses were built or bought by the landlords and a few were inherited. The study also revealed that most landlords still demand a minimum of two years advance rent from tenants contrary to Section 25(5) of Act 220.

#### **4.2 Description of Compound Houses and the Units Therein**

The compound houses in the three (3) neighbourhoods are mostly single or two-storey buildings with majority of the units being self-contained with a few ordinary ones. They all have a courtyard, which is now irregular in shape as a result of the improvements made. From Table 2 below, majority (22) of these compound houses were at least 31 years old, implying that they are old structures which were built with the design described in the literature – suites of single banked units that can be accessed from an unroofed square or rectangular courtyard (Awanyo, 2009). It has been argued that the characteristics of a house reflect the housing market conditions at prevailing at the time of construction (Gosling et al, 1993). 30 or more years ago, household incomes were generally and taste and preference was quite moderate and thus demand for self-contained units was also non-existent as compound house tenants were content with ordinary units.

Per the findings of this study, the definition by Awanyo (2009) does not give a true picture of current design of compound houses in Kumasi. Rather, it is now more suitable to define a compound house as ‘a single or multi-storey structure with suites of single-banked self-contained and/or ordinary units that can be accessed from an unroofed irregular courtyard’. Majority of the self-contained units found in the study area used to be ordinary units that witnessed some improvement. They come with all the spaces, facilities and services needed for a tenant to live independent of others in the compound house. In this case, every unit and its facilities were provided with an individual in mind. Apart from this kind of self-contained unit, another common kind was discovered during the data collection. These units have a bedroom, hall (where it is chamber and hall). And every two units of that kind in the house share a kitchen, toilet and bathroom and an electricity meter. In fact, per the findings, there is really no one exact kind of self-contained unit. There are variations depending on the compound house in question.

For the purpose of this study, it was necessary to find out the number of self-contained units as against the ordinary units in each compound house in the three (3) neighbourhoods selected for this study. Findings revealed that there are over 363 self-contained units as against 89 ordinary units. That is, self-contained units in Kumasi are now about four (4) times more than the ordinary units. All self-contained units used to be ordinary units that have been improved. Indeed, the continuous improvement of the ordinary units is changing the face of most compound houses in Kumasi. The key question is that ‘when did compound houses begin to change face?’

**Table 2: Characteristics of Compound Houses in the Study Areas**

CHARACTERISTICS	COMPOUND HOUSES			TOTAL
	Neighbourhood			
	Odencho Kwadaso (n=10)	Patase (n=10)	Gyinyase (n=10)	
<i>Age of Property</i>				
10 – 20 years	1	1	1	3
21 – 30 years	-	3	2	5
31 – 40 years	5	3	4	12
41 years	4	3	3	10
<i>Type of Unit</i>	(n=159)	(n=143)	(n=150)	
Single room	9	13	11	33
Single room self-contained	67	54	63	184
Chamber and Hall	21	18	17	56
Chamber and Hall self-contained	62	58	59	179

Source: Field Survey (July 2014)

Findings indicate that the decision to improve units in compound houses began in the 1990s and has continued to date. As earlier indicated in the literature, this was the period liberalization in Ghana gave way for foreign real estate developers whose focus was mainly accommodation for private ownership, most of which constitutes three and four-bedroom apartment houses (Arku et al, 2012). Though they could not afford these luxurious apartments, compound house tenants had the desire to experience the modern comfortable life enjoyed by occupants of these apartments (Andreasen et al 2005). Consequently, landlords of compound houses gradually began to adopt the design of these apartments to provide an affordable alternative for tenants.

### **4.3 Why Tenants Prefer Self-Contained Units in Compound Houses**

In order to better understand the reasons why tenants prefer self-contained units in compound houses in Kumasi, their responses were analyzed and ranked. All three statistical results (see Table 3) point to the fact that increased convenience, avoidance of common area maintenance and health concerns are the three main reasons for tenants' preference of self-contained units. Though all the reasons have mean scores that are greater than a neutral score of 3 and an RII which is more than 0.5, the three best ranked are significantly greater. This is confirmed by the standard deviation, where the top ranked reasons have a value of less than 1. Increased convenience was the main reason tenants gave for their preference of self-contained units in compound houses. Most tenants believe that, a self-contained by its nature, provide most (if not all) of the space or facilities at their disposal thereby giving them the comfort they need. For others, increased convenience means having a relatively bigger space to accom-

modate their nuclear family. The proper arrangement of the spaces in self-contained units, some tenants said, makes them comfortable. However, a few tenants were not happy about the arrangement of spaces in their self-contained units. We found that the entrance to some of the some self-contained units is through the kitchen. Tenants of such units complained of heat from the kitchen reaching the hall during period of cooking and hence making the place uncomfortable for them.

The avoidance of common area maintenance also ranked very high in the responses of tenants. Majority of tenants consider the maintenance of shared areas as inconveniencing and time consuming and as such prefer a self-contained unit where they determines how and when to clean. Findings revealed that, with the exception of a few houses, the practice of a cleaning schedule for the shared space is fading out due to the increasing number of self-contained units in compound houses. The trend nowadays is that every tenant cleans his/her unit and its frontage, while hiring a cleaner to tidy up the common area. Lastly, with the outbreak of cholera and the increasing fear of being infected with the 'deadly' ebola virus, many Ghanaians have become more conscious of their health. Though the cholera and ebola scare might be recent, most tenants demonstrated a high level of awareness of the health implication of shared space in a compound house. Therefore, they find refuge in self-contained units where there is very minimal or no sharing at all.

**Table 3: Tenants' Reasons for Preference of Self-contained units in Compound houses**

TENANT REASONS	LIKERT SCALE					Mean	Standard Deviation	RII	Rank
	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)				
Increased Convenience	0	0	0	8	48	4.85	0.35	0.97	1
Avoidance of common area maintenance	0	0	0	10	46	4.82	0.39	0.96	2
Health concerns	0	0	3	12	41	4.67	0.58	0.93	3
Proximity to work place	0	15	13	3	25	3.67	1.29	0.73	4
Proximity to the CBD	7	6	18	10	15	3.35	1.33	0.67	5

Source: Field Survey (July, 2014)

#### 4.4 Why Landlords Improve Units in Compound Houses

Having outlined the main reasons why tenants preferred self-contained units, it is worth knowing the reason most landlords are improving units in their compound houses. Using mean, standard deviation and RII to analyze landlord responses, as captured in Table 4, it can be concluded that the three main reasons constitute charging high rents, meeting the high demand and enhancing privacy of tenants. Most landlords saw self-contained units as a means to enable them charge higher rents than before. It is believed that the excess demand for self-contained units over the supply gives landlords the opportunity to reap the latent benefits after conversion by charging higher rents for the few ones available. To these landlords, their actions are justifiable provided they satisfy the needs of the desperate tenants.

High demand for self-contained units also ranked high among the reasons given by landlords. According to most landlords, very few prospective tenants, nowadays, ask for ordinary units in compound houses; they all want self-contained units. We found that prospective tenants, who rely on the estate agents, are sometimes willing to wait for up to 6 months to secure a self-contained accommodation. The existence of this excess demand is what has provoked some landlords to improve their properties. Landlords stressed that tenant privacy as one of the main factors for the improvement of units in compound houses. They cited instances of discomfort where some tenants cook in the courtyard and have co-tenants look into the food as they pass by. Again, tenants after bathing have no option than to walk through the courtyard, in the full glare of other tenants. To address the problem of lack of privacy, most landlords have improved ordinary units into self-contained units with all the essential facilities. In a nutshell, work by Arslan (2011) proposes that improving compound house units into self-contained to more privacy for tenants is critically essentially because it will solve the problems associated with sharing of services, facilities and infrastructure in compound houses in Kumasi.

A few landlords took the decision to improve their units to self-contained because of their past experience with tenants in ordinary units. Particularly, they had difficulty ensuring that tenants take good care of the common areas. For instance, a landlord narrated his experience that when his property only had ordinary units, some tenants had the habit of refusing to clean the shared washrooms and kitchen and pay utility bills. He therefore converted all his 15 ordinary units to self-contained units in order to solve the problem. At the time of data collection, all units in the house in question were all self-contained, each having an electricity meter. There is also a perception among some landlords that 'low income tenants do not keep houses clean'. Therefore, they improve units to attract middle class tenants who they claim keep their units tidy and are ready to pay some service charge to hire a cleaner to clean the common areas and dump the garbage. Some landlords also relished the prestige of accommodating middle class tenants such as bankers, lecturers and doctors amongst others.

**Table 4: Landlords' Reasons for Housing Improvement in Kumasi**

LANDLORD REASONS	LIKERT SCALE					Mean	Standard Deviation	RII	Rank
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)				
To charge high rents	0	0	1	2	20	4.83	0.49	0.97	1
To meet the high demand	0	0	1	6	16	4.65	0.57	0.93	2
To enhance tenant privacy	0	0	1	7	15	4.61	0.58	0.92	3
To attract middle class tenants	0	2	3	3	15	4.17	1.03	0.87	4
Previous experience with tenants	0	4	5	3	11	3.91	1.20	0.78	5

Source: Field Survey (July, 2014)

#### **4.5 Effect of Improvement of Units on Rental Values**

Findings confirmed that landlords' response to tenants' preference for self-contained units in compound houses has contributed to an increase in rental values in Kumasi. Tables 5 and 6 below give a better appreciation of the situation on the ground. In Kwadaso, Patase and Gyinyase, for instance, one would need about three (3) times the rent of an ordinary unit to secure a self-contained accommodation. If rents for self-contained units can be this high, then it's necessary to understand what landlords consider in pegging rent at those levels. Data gathered indicates that most landlords consider the general economic conditions namely; inflation and interest rates; as well as their personal economic circumstances in fixing rents. But their calculations are not based on any scientific or mathematical formula. For instance this is what a landlord had to say in response to the question of how he fixes his rent;

"To arrive at the rent for the units in my house, I take into account the increases in the prices of goods and services. I also consider my personal circumstance. For one unit I recently rented out, I increased the monthly rent by GH¢20 in order to get an amount that will enable me pay my daughters school fees". (Interview, 23 July, 2014)

Interestingly, some landlords' also crave to improve ordinary units in compound houses has led to some tenants having to pay higher rents too in order to retain their ordinary units at the expiration of their tenancies. Below is an excerpt of another landlord's responds at Patase;

"Last year, the term of one of tenants in my ordinary unit expired. I told him to move out so I could improve the unit to self-contained. But he insisted he wanted to remain in the ordinary unit. Then we came to an agreement that he will pay a monthly rent of GH¢70 instead of GH¢50 for a single room". (Interview, 22 July, 2014)

As clearly indicated in Table 5, the rental value of an ordinary unit (single room) at Patase ranges between GH¢40 and GH¢50 per month. However, in this case, the landlord made the tenant pay an additional GH¢20 to compensate for the landlord's decision to compensate for the higher rent obtainable from an upgrade to a self-contained unit. Though such tenants may feel exploited, there seem to be very little they can do because ordinary units are becoming scarce in the Patase area.

**Table 5: Rental Value of Units in Compound Houses at Kwadaso and Patase**

Location	Characteristics of Property Sampled	Room Type	Building Component	Applicable Finish	Rent Payable (Per Month) (GH¢)
Kwadaso and Patase	A combination of single and two storey structures	Single Room	Ceiling	Mainly painted plywood	40-50
			Walls	Sandcrete block work rendered and painted in emulsion	
			Windows	Mainly Louvre Blades	
			Doors	Primarily Panel doors with very few flush ones	
			Floor	Mainly cement screed	
		Single room Self Contained	Ceiling	Primarily painted plywood and plastic T&G	120-150
			Walls	Sandcrete block work rendered and painted in emulsion	
			Windows	Mainly louvre blades with a few glazed windows	
			Doors	Primarily Panel doors.	
			Floor	cement screed and terrazzo	
		Chamber and Hall	Ceiling	Plywood	70-100
			Walls	Sandcrete block work rendered and painted in emulsion	
			Windows	Mainly louvre Blades	
			Doors	Primarily Panel doors with very few	
			Floor	Cement screed and very few broken ceramic tiles	
		Chamber and Hall Self Contain	Ceiling	plywood and a few plastic T&G	200-250
			Walls	Sandcrete block work rendered and painted in emulsion	
			Windows	Mainly louvre Blades	
			Doors	Primarily Panel doors with very few flush ones	
Floor	Primarily ceramic tiles and Terrazzo with a few cement screed				

Source: Field Survey (July, 2014)

**Table 6: Rental Value of Units in Compound Houses at Gyinyase**

Location	Characteristics of Property Sampled	Room Type	Building Component	Applicable Finish	Rent Payable (Per Month) (GH¢)
Gyinyase	A combination of single and two storey structures	Single Room	Ceiling	Mainly painted plywood	25-30
			Walls	Sandcrete block work rendered and painted in emulsion	
			Windows	Mainly Louvre Blades	
			Doors	Primarily Panel doors with very few flush ones	
			Floor	Mainly cement screed	
		Single room self Contained	Ceiling	Primarily painted plywood and plastic T&G	60-100
			Walls	Sandcrete block work rendered and painted in emulsion	
			Windows	Mainly louvre blades with a few glazed windows	
			Doors	Primarily Panel doors.	
			Floor	cement screed and terrazzo	
		Chamber and Hall	Ceiling	Plywood	80-100
			Walls	Sandcrete block work rendered and painted in emulsion	
			Windows	Mainly louvre Blades	
			Doors	Primarily Panel doors with very few	
			Floor	Cement screed and very few broken ceramic tiles	
		Chamber and Hall Self Contain	Ceiling	plywood and a few plastic T&G	120-180
			Walls	Sandcrete block work rendered and painted in emulsion	
Windows	Mainly louvre Blades				
Doors	Primarily Panel doors with very few flush ones				
Floor	Primarily ceramic tiles and Terrazzo with a few cement screed				

Source: Field Survey (July, 2014)

## 5.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

The findings of this study have shown that there are increasing numbers of self-contained units in compound houses as against a reduction in the number of ordinary units. It is therefore not surprising that self-contained units' number up to four (4) times the number of ordinary units in Kumasi. This is still an ongoing process as many more ordinary units are being upgraded to self-contained units. Principal among the reasons landlords are willing to upgrade ordinary units to self-contained units, is to charge higher rents as a result of the excess demand over supply. On the other hand, the key reasons most tenants prefer self-contained units to the ordinary units are increased convenience, avoidance of common area maintenance and tenant privacy, even though such a preference comes at an extra cost to them. The study found that a tenant would need up to three (3) times the rent of an ordinary unit to secure a self-contained one in most parts of Kumasi. This is generally too high for the low income earners. The compound house is becoming the preferred

choice of housing for the middle class tenants, who mostly have the ability to pay the rent of self-contained units. Gradually, the poor, who do not have the financial strength to rent a self-contained unit, are moving out of compound houses into worse accommodations. This is an early warning to the government to begin to fashion out a housing policy or programme that will embrace all and sundry.

The preference for self-contained units as against ordinary units in compound houses in urban Ghana is not necessarily a bad thing. However, certain issues like rents charged need to be adequately checked to ensure that landlords do not take undue advantage of tenants. It is very imperative to note that the legal framework in addressing the issue of rent advance payment exists. The bane is public awareness and enforcement of the provisions of the Rent Act. It is recommended that the Rent Control Department educate the general public on the key provisions of the Rent Act and the implication of non-compliance of the law. It will also be worth exploring a stakeholder workshop where landlords' reasons for non-adherence of the six (6) month rent advance will be raised and subject same to a thorough discussion. With this, any amendments or otherwise suggested would be seen by landlords as theirs and easily adhered to accordingly.

The issue of increasing of rent based on personal circumstances of most landlords could be addressed if the government supplements the current units with affordable housing, focusing mainly on high-rise properties. This would naturally curtail the housing deficit and in so doing allow market forces to determine rent and minimize the exploitation of tenants due to the 'monopoly' enjoyed by landlords. Additionally, the researchers reiterate that the Estate Agency Bill be passed in order to restrict the practice of estate agency in the hands of professionals, notably valuation and estate surveyors and in so doing give landlords and tenants value for money. In the interim, it is suggested that members of the Ghana Institution of Surveyors (GhIS) should take up the task of building and circulating rental values that are based on research and implied rental growth rate as well as explicit growth rate determined by market evidence. During data collection, we found a number of new compound houses, with all units being self-contained. Further research must focus on understanding if tenants prefer to live an improved unit in an old compound house or a new compound house where all units have been originally designed to be self-contained. It will also be interesting to find out if there are any differences in rental values in these two cases.

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