

Greetings from Ghana #6

I cannot say with absolute certainty because I have not seen them all, but from what I have seen I would venture that in every neighborhood you can travel to in Accra you will see a garage, a house, a shop, a commercial building, an apartment building and even a shopping center unfinished.

When I first got here I saw them all and painted them with the same brush – abandoned. It was depressing. But the longer I looked the more I became aware that there are probably as many different backstories as there are buildings.

Some houses are stopped because of a lawsuit. In my neighborhood one family had a big fight when the father who was a developer passed away. As a result, all the houses were left incomplete during the legal battle. After the courts ruled which family members were entitled to which houses none were finished and all went up for sale.

Interested in an unfinished cement house that has sat in the weather for a few years? You are not alone. Apparently no one else is either. (I still have no idea where all the 13 bedrooms are for this one are, except perhaps on paper)



One of the advantages of living near the equator is that the weather stays pretty much the same. It is either hot and dry or hot and wet. Cold and snow have no reality here and you could live without windows and doors if you had to. On some occasions a home builder will finish the shell of the house as far as they can build with the cement, roof it, and then allow someone to move in as a way of having some type of security there until it can be finished. The person or family gets a roof over their head at no



Because they lack trees in any great quantity here, buildings are made of cement and concrete products. Concrete blocks are often made by hand and are not as durable as the machine made ones so a finish coat is added as a protectant. When the project takes far longer than anticipated, the results can be startling when it becomes evident the mortar around the bricks is stronger than the exposed concrete block. Commercial developers and independent business folks have



cost. And it is a win-win all the way around.

Sometimes the builder will have plans for a larger structure and stop after so much has been done. They will then use the finished part with plans to build on as they can. For the homeowner, the reality may change and the money may not materialize as they had planned.



it a bit easier in that they will build a building part way and then rent out a portion and seek tenants before they finish the rest of the building. Or the business will occupy the site and use profits to secure the rest of the building. It is not uncommon to see commercial buildings waiting for tenants to become finished,



Some developers have larger dreams and bigger plans.



For others, the proforma was not met. The ship has sailed. And the relic left behind -- be it a shopping mall on the outskirts of the city or a downtown prime commercial office building -- is going to have to come down before anything else can be done . . . making the property almost worthless. Look around anywhere in Accra and you'll see them, buildings with stories that say "To Be Continued. . . "



