

# Kingsway

Shopping Emporiums of  
West Africa: The Kingsway

Iain Jackson

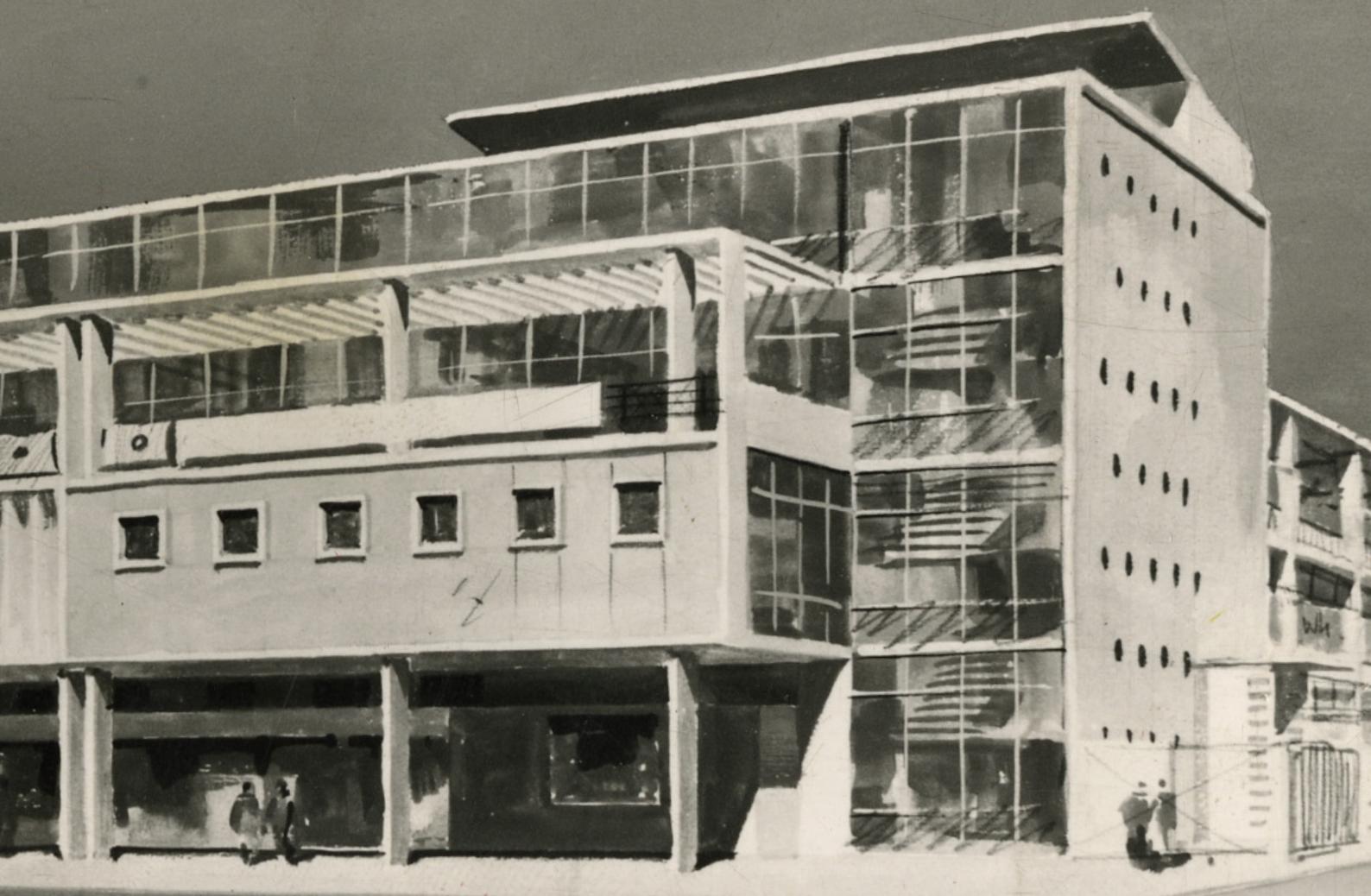
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Claire Tunstall



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Kingsway





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Africa: The United Africa Company. Dr Ragaban was also the Research Associate on the digitisation and data entry of the UAC Photocard collection available to view here: <https://archives-unilever.com/explore/search/search/collection:gb1752uac11110>. This work was undertaken whilst Iain Jackson was 'Architectural Historian in Residence' at Unilever Archives and Records Management in 2024 and involved digitising over 2000 images. Dr Ragaban completed all of the data entry which was a huge and difficult task. The project was funded by the University of Liverpool Impact Acceleration Account. We are very grateful, again, for this support which has resulted in a major photographic collection being made publicly available.

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Iain Jackson and Claire Tunstall

# **Kingsway Stores Contested Visions of Developments**

A version of this essay features as Chapter 13 in <https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/architecture-empire-and-trade-9781350411319/>, by Iain Jackson, Ewan Harrison, Michele Tenzon, Rixt Woudstra, and Claire Tunstall, published under Creative Commons Attribution NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International licence (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0, <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>). We particularly acknowledge the work Ewan Harrison contributed to researching and crafting this chapter.

Further research on the Kingsway Stores can also be viewed at Ewan Harrison, Iain Jackson, Irene Appeaning-Addo, and Oluwaseun Muraina “Kingsway Leads the Way to Modern Living.” British Profit Seeking and Modernism in Ghana and Nigeria 1920-1970, *Journal of Design History*, doi 10.1093/jdh/epae010.

## Kingsway serves the Nation

The new Kingsway Stores in Port Harcourt,  
to be opened on 25th October by  
Doctor the Honourable M. I. Okpara,  
Premier of Eastern Nigeria, represents a capital  
investment of over £800,000 by  
The United Africa Company of Nigeria Limited.  
It stands as a symbol of confidence in Nigeria.

KINGSWAY STORES OF NIGERIA LIMITED

*Kingsway*

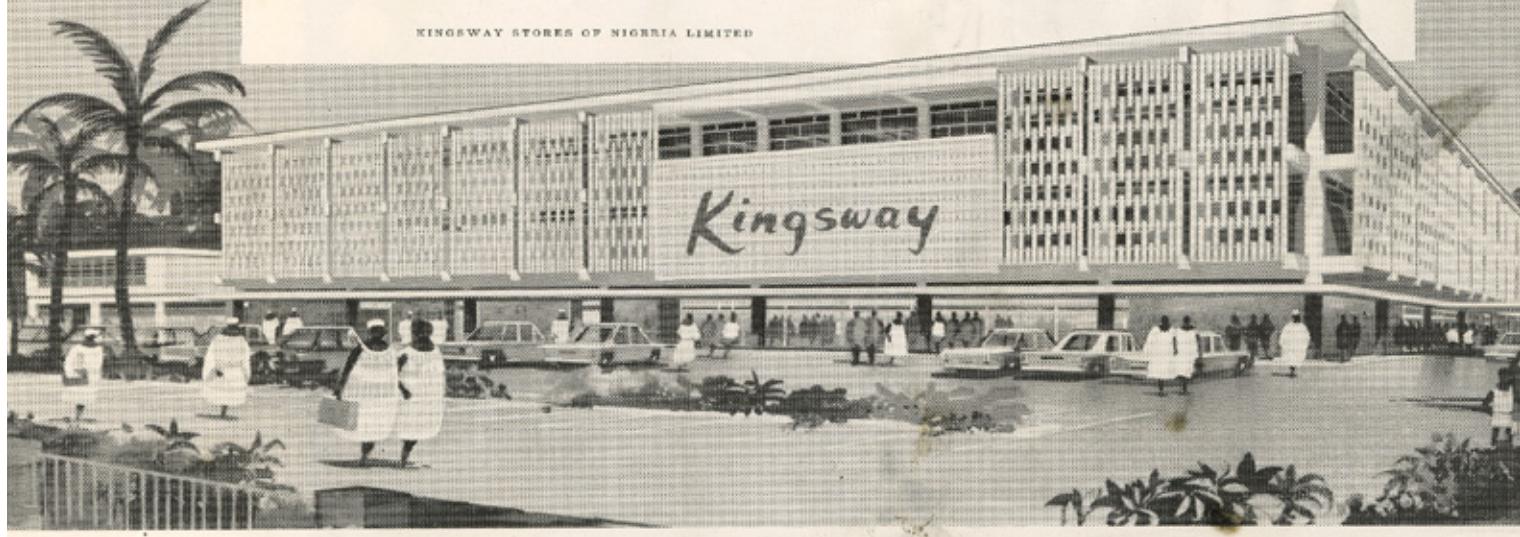


Figure 1: Port Harcourt: Kingsway serves the nation, 1961, UAC/1/11/21/8

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The opening of the new Kingsway Store in Cape Coast, held in January 1975, was a lavish affair, attended, as one local newspaper noted, by 'all the prominent citizens of Cape Coast'.<sup>1</sup>

The ribbon cutting was presided over by the Omanhene of Oguaa, Nana Mbrah V, and the Chief Executives of both Kingsway Stores Ghana Ltd., and the UAC of Ghana Ltd., whilst a widely circulated address was given by Colonel Emmanuel-Abim Baidoo, the Regional Commissioner in the military government that had overthrown the Second Ghana Republic three years previously.<sup>2</sup> As was standard at these occasions, Baidoo praised the UAC and Kingsway's role in the Ghanaian economy, noting that 'their contribution to the private sector of our economy has been stupendous'.<sup>3</sup> However, he then went off-script to bemoan the small scale of the new store before him:

*We would have been happier if the skyline had also been improved. The construction of a [multi] storey building would not only offer improved shopping facilities but would also contribute immensely to the face-lift programme for Cape Coast. I am*

*hopeful that in the not too distant future we shall have the occasion to assemble again in another part of this municipality to witness the opening of a Kingsway store which is housed in a [multi] storeyed building.<sup>4</sup>*

This episode captures the tensions that accompanied the development of new Kingsway stores in post-colonial Ghana and Nigeria. The Kingsway Stores, a UAC subsidiary, had grown throughout the colonial period: by the 1950s there were stores from Banjul in the Gambia to Victoria in Southern Cameroon, with the majority of branches concentrated in the major towns and cities of Ghana and Nigeria. The chain had largely Africanised its customer base and expanded as a response to political independence, and had built large, luxuriously outfitted new department stores in key urban locations to mark the independence of Ghana and Nigeria.<sup>5</sup> In this, Kingsway Stores was making a contribution to the developmentalist visions of African nationalist politicians. Like contemporaneous factories and office buildings built by the UAC, Kingsway Stores were widely disseminated as

advertising images under the heading 'Fine Buildings Enrich a Country' and other such slogans, framed as the UAC's contribution to programmes of development (see Figure 1).<sup>6</sup>



Figure 2: Suburban Kingsway, UAC Photographs Accession, 1998:11-17  
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But by the 1970s, Kingsway's was promoting smaller, single-storey stores, often in suburban locations: in effect, the chain switched its emphasis from building department stores to supermarkets (see Figure 2). This was not popular with local landed elites, planners, and policy makers, who remained stubbornly wedded to the

notion of the large-scale urban department store on prominent sites, as symbolic of regional prestige, something that led to conflict with the management of the Kingsway Stores and its parent company, the UAC.

As a result of this shift towards smaller stores, new shop buildings were

increasingly built through locally based intermediaries such as indigenous property developers. Examining the development of these stores reveals the multiplicity of actors that shaped the built environment in postcolonial West Africa. These developments also reveal the ways in which the UAC sought to divest from direct investment in capital-heavy building projects in prime city sites whilst still expanding its business operations across the region. In a recent exchange in Twentieth-Century British History, the economic historian Vanessa Ogle posed the questions, who profited from empire, and who profited from empire's ends?<sup>7</sup> The UAC's post-colonial expansion of the Kingsway chain illustrates the ways in which British capital and profit extraction operated in the changed circumstances after empire's ends, even as the company sought to divest itself from cumbersome investments in the region. In contrast to the widely narrated capital-intensive developments of the immediate post-war years, a newly agile form of development was called for by the shifting political terrain of post-colonial West Africa, something captured in the small, single storey stores built by the UAC for the Kingsway Chain in the 1970s.

## Development of the Kingsway Chain

In 1915, Miller Brothers Ltd., opened a grand new store on the High Street in Accra. Prominently located on a corner site next to the historic Ussher Town Fort, the store had a grand presence in the streetscape: classical arcaded, ground-floor, sheltered, large display windows whilst its upper floor featured round-headed arched windows framed by classical pilasters. Miller's named their new store Kingsway, in a knowing reification of the imperial connotations

of the recently completed avenue in London's Holborn, where Miller Brothers was headquartered in a stodgily baroque office building, West Africa House.

The new Accra Kingsway Store represented a major departure from the standard mode of retail in West Africa. Whilst the colonial enterprise was mainly concerned with extraction and import-export trade, there was also a strong retail component to nearly all European enterprise in West Africa, whether trading basic household items (such as cooking utensils and foodstuffs), distilled alcoholic beverages, and imported cloths, through to building materials and machines. This process of retail had generally taken place in simple, rather domestic buildings with wooden verandas and pitched corrugated iron roofs. Inside, goods were stored and displayed in a haphazard manner, on shelves, in cabinets, and hung from the ceiling, with some higher priced goods displayed in glass fronted vitrines. One photograph of a Miller's store in Tarkwa, taken in 1912, shows tins and boxes neatly displayed in open cabinets behind a high wooden counter, with what appears to be a melange of hats, crockery, cooking pots, and bentwood chairs piled together chaotically on a shelf above.<sup>8</sup> Customers were separated from the goods by a high wooden counter, or even by metal grills, and



Figure 3: 'Always a good deal' advertisement for Kingsway, showing drawing of Accra Store, 1956, UAC/1/11/20/3. Reproduced with kind permission of Unilever from an original in Unilever Archives.

goods were fetched for customers by either the storekeeper, usually a European, or by store assistants, who were usually African.<sup>9</sup>

However, as an account of a visit to the Accra Kingsway store in 1920 recorded, its approach to merchandising was radically different: goods were displayed

in separate departments, which customers were free to walk around. On the ground floor separate displays of printed cloth 'in patterns that are



Figure 4: Advertisement for opening of a new Sekondi Store, date unknown, c. 1940s, UAC /2/10/B3/6/1/2  
Reproduced with kind permission of Unilever from an original in Unilever Archives

particularly alluring to the peoples of the Gold Coast', gramophones and records, food produce 'dainty preservations of meat, fish, fowl, fruit, vegetable and cereal, with biscuits, confectionary, and choice liquids of the culinary arts in an abundance well calculated to satisfy the most fastidious demands', were laid out, whilst upstairs 'habiliments for the lady and gentleman' were displayed in a balustraded gallery which had a view down to 'nearly the whole of the lower' floor though a central light-well.<sup>10</sup> The interior was 'spacious', the staircase 'wide', the clothes sold 'were kept ever abreast of the prevailing fashions', the perfumery was 'a revelation of high-class goods', for the Kingsway store, explicitly modelled on European department stores, was the most exclusive 'shopping resort' in the whole of the Gold Coast colony.<sup>11</sup> In 1919 Miller's was absorbed into the African & Eastern Trading Corporation, and thus, a decade later when the African & Eastern and the Niger Company merged to form the UAC, the Kingsway Accra store became the most prominent in the UAC's network of over 12,000 retail outlets across West Africa.<sup>12</sup> The chain grew under the UAC's ownership:



Figure 5: Freetown Kingsway, 1957, UAC/1/11/9/46  
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stores were opened throughout West Africa in the 1930s and 1940s. By the mid-1950s, Kingsway stores could be found in each of the British West African capitals, Accra, Lagos, Freetown, Bathurst, and in many of the larger towns and cities across the region: Cape Coast, Sekondi, and Tamale in the Gold Coast, and in Jos and Kaduna in Nigeria.<sup>13</sup>

The larger stores – especially those in the capital cities – were housed in purpose-built buildings designed by the Unilever in-house architects department, led by James Lomax Simpson. These stores adapted a *moderne* idiom reminiscent of interwar commercial buildings in the UK, similar to that deployed for the contemporary UAC office buildings. Beyond some light adaptation for local climates through the use of verandas, window hoods, and canopies, these buildings do not stylistically relate to their contexts in any way, with the possible exception of the Kaduna branch of Kingsway, the corner entrance tower of which replicated the *zankwaye*, the elaborate corner finales found in Hausa palaces.<sup>14</sup> Many of the smaller stores

were rather simple in their architectural expression: Kingsway Tamale, 'about the only place [in the Northern Territories] where one can buy other than the bare necessities of life' was a single storeyed structure with a pitched roof, and despite its grand entrance tower, much of the Kingsway in Kaduna appears to have operated from converted colonial era bungalows.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, the Kingsway brand carried an immense amount of prestige. Not for nothing was the Kingsway company's articles of association based on those of Harrods.<sup>16</sup>

The growth of the Kingsway chain reflected the growth of European communities in West Africa, their increasing embourgeoisement and their increasing reorientation towards the nuclear family. European women were originally deterred from settling in British West Africa, 'the white man's grave' was widely held to be 'no place for white women'.<sup>17</sup> Positions in the colonial administrations were advertised as 'for bachelors only', one bank refused permission for staff on the coast to marry before they had

There's dress sense in every line of Kingsway's day and evening frocks. For the fuller figure there are clever creations in gay prints, silks and crepes—and some "exclusives" for those special occasions.

**Have Something New**  
**FOR EASTER**

**Kingsway offer you the widest choice in fashions**

Kingsway's fashion buyers have been busy in London. Result — the fascinating collection of new season's styles awaiting your approval on your very next visit to Kingsway Ladies' Department.

**Don't forget the Accessories...**

Attention to the details of shoes, handbag and gloves, creates the charm and attractiveness of your ensemble. Kingsway have a big choice for you.

**Cosmetics, too!**

Aids to beauty are indispensable, as every woman knows. Complete beauty boxes or individual items by your favourite makers are stocked by Kingsway.

**CLOTHES FOR MEN**

Suits, shirts, shoes, socks . . . the smartest styles in town come from the Men's Department at Kingsway.

**SPORTS TROUSERS**

Kingsway specialize in slacks for men tailored in the modern manner. They have your size: your shade. Ask to see the latest arrivals.

For men about town (or up-country) Kingsway have a wide selection of ready-made suits, cut to give the well-dressed look and reasonably priced.

Kingsway Men's Department keeps you abreast of fashion

**Kingsway**  
**STORES**

HOWE STREET, FREETOWN, P.O. BOX 422. TELEPHONE 708, 709

Figure 7: Kingsway Easter advertisement, 1954, UAC/1/11/20/3

Reproduced with kind permission of Unilever from an original in Unilever Archives

served eight years in post and the Niger Company had to give permission for its staff to marry.<sup>18</sup> The colonial official Sir Alfred Burns described early twentieth-century West Africa as, ‘essentially a bachelor’s paradise, where a man could dress as he pleased, drink as much as he liked, and be easy in his morals without causing a scandal’.<sup>19</sup> But between 1920 and 1930 the population of European women in the Gold Coast colony tripled, although the absolute numbers remained small, and there was similar growth in numbers in the Nigeria and Sierra Leone colonies.<sup>20</sup>

This changing gender balance in West Africa’s European communities ‘put new demands on the White communities to tighten their ranks, clarify their boundaries and mark out their social space’.<sup>21</sup> A sharpening of physical boundaries followed, with European administrators and traders increasingly housed in bungalows in European-only reservations.<sup>22</sup> Within these, a mimetic of an haut-bourgeois English life was performed through a constant round of dinner parties, garden parties, tennis

parties, and sundowners on terraces. That the ‘chief leisure activity of the European community was drinking’ is attested by the list of a standard fittings of a UAC company bungalow, which suggested that each house be supplied with six each of wine glasses, sherry glasses, gin and bitters glasses, and ‘champagne or grapefruit glasses’, except in the houses of higher grade staff which should be outfitted with nine of each type.<sup>23</sup> The consumption of imported European foods and drinks, clothing, and household goods was necessary to sustain the fictive little Britains within the reservation. And it was this consumption that the Kingsway chain grew to satisfy. Early advertising made this clear, with one advertisement from the 1930s noting that Kingsway ‘delivered direct to bungalows’.<sup>24</sup>

The increase of expatriates in West Africa, as part of the ‘Second Colonial Occupation’, initially offered Kingsway what the UAC board described as a degree of ‘protective colouring’, but as the scale of political change occurring in British West Africa in the 1950s became increasingly clear to Kingsway’s management, who noted

with alarm that expatriates were ‘drifting away’ from some areas, and that the spending habits of ‘the more transient’ expatriate population who remained had changed too, ‘being now largely daily necessities, rather than consumer durables’.<sup>26</sup> Kingsway, its board noted, had ‘to adapt ourselves to the new pattern’.<sup>27</sup> In the years around independence, architecture was deployed as a central tool in Kingsway’s adaption and survival strategies.<sup>28</sup>

## Ready for Independence: Expansion at the Ends of Empire

Perhaps paradoxically, given this loss of its main market, Kingsway's response to independence was an expansionary one. The UAC invested in grand new stores opened in key cities in Ghana and Nigeria in the years around independence. Like the UAC's new industrial and manufacturing enterprises, these new Kingsway stores were deployed by the UAC to telegraph a commitment to the emerging postcolonial regimes, and also to capitalise on the nations' 'euphoric' excitement and optimism that so often bolstered sales and economic activity.<sup>29</sup>

The first of these was a new store in Accra, opened with much fanfare by Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah as part of Ghana's independence celebrations in 1957. Designed by architects TP Bennett & Partners, the store's street façade was composed of glass and aluminium curtain walling with an extruded central first floor section supporting a restaurant terrace. Internally, it was luxuriously outfitted with terrazzo and marble, and featured

the first escalators in anglophone West Africa. The store sold clothing, household goods, modern furniture 'as good as any Danish', electrical appliances, and expensive imported food and drink, to an increasingly Africanised clientele.<sup>30</sup> Through fashion shows, ideal home shows and the like, the Kingsway Accra store cemented itself as a central plank in the performance of a new

kind of elite modernity in Accra, showing the continuities between colonial and post-colonial visual and design cultures in West Africa.<sup>31</sup>



Figure 8: The new Accra Kingsway, 1957, UAC Box 21, 2219  
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*Shop in Comfort  
at Accra's  
most modern Store*

LARGE CAR PARK • AIR CONDITIONED COLD STORE  
CAFETERIA • FASHION & HAIRDRESSING SALONS  
SPACIOUS SUPERMARKET

Figure 9: Advertisement for new Kingsway in Accra, 1957, UAC/2 /1 /B1 /8 /1/10  
Reproduced with kind permission of Unilever from an original in Unilever Archives

The new department store was located away from the congested historic commercial district by the coast, on the new road connecting the city centre and the airport, Independence Avenue. It took a prestigious site on the new boulevard, amongst new government buildings, and the headquarters of international businesses, a move that made both commercial sense and served to associate

Kingsway, and by extension the UAC, with Nkrumah's urban ambitions for Accra.<sup>32</sup> The new store was also built in close proximity to the Ghana headquarters of the UAC Motors at Bedford House, further underscoring the UAC's contributions to Nkrumah's urban ambitions.

The subsequent negotiations between local planners, civil servants and the UAC were complex and protracted. At one point, the government proposed that the UAC could obtain a site through slum clearance, facilitated by a special legislative order.<sup>33</sup> The negative PR arising from the UAC dispossessing African landowners in this way was not acceptable to the UAC – as the company

chairman Frederick Pedler later recalled 'it would have been silly for any expatriate company to become embroiled in such a process, and we were not as stupid as that'.<sup>34</sup> However, following interventions from Nkrumah, the UAC was able to secure a prominent site for its new store, and construction work began.<sup>35</sup>

Pedler's reminiscence positions this episode as the UAC aiding Nkrumah in his ambitions to change the image of Accra. He remembered that 'Nkrumah told us that it was the duty of the United Africa Company to provide a fine department store in time for the independence celebration. He wanted every distinguished visitor to go back home saying that Accra had shopping facilities that were equal to anything in the world'.<sup>36</sup> Yet much of the archive suggests that the redevelopment of the Accra store had been in the works for some time, and was perhaps happening in parallel to independence as much as it was spurred on by it. By 1954, the UAC had been 'looking for some-time' for a new Kingsway site, for the old store 'which had looked so modern in 1920, now seemed terribly small'.<sup>37</sup>

Indeed, the UAC had even explored and discounted the option of extending the existing store facilities before deciding to develop a whole new store: plans in the UAC Collection show a proposed block in Lomax-Simpson's characteristic *moderne* idiom awkwardly grafted onto the pilastered facade of the Edwardian store in Jamestown.<sup>38</sup> Even the carefully managed opening of the store to coincide with the 1957 independence celebrations was contingent: construction delays had prevented the store opening in the December of 1956, when it was originally planned 'to benefit from the Christmas shopping rush'.<sup>39</sup> To see all of the operations of the UAC and Kingsway through the lens of political conditions negates the quotidian commercial logics that governed its operations day-to-day. Nevertheless, it is clear that for the UAC this luxurious new store was built at least in part to cement the company's position in post-independence Ghana, Pedler recalled that the new store was developed in response to 'political and public pressure', and that it was regarded as 'a public relations exercise in the short term', as it 'would be dishonest to

pretend the store in its early days would earn a good return on capital'.<sup>40</sup>

Following the redevelopment of Accra, the late 1950s saw an expansion programme in Nigeria, with substantial new stores opened in the Eastern region, at Port Harcourt, in the Western region, at Ibadan, and in the Lagos industrial and port suburb, Apapa, all of which were planned in the late 1950s and completed by the early 1960s, to coincide with Nigerian Independence. As at Accra, commercial considerations undergirded these decisions: in a 1961 discussion about the scope for the new store in Port Harcourt, one UAC board member 'queried whether same standards as Accra and Lagos was justified for Port Harcourt', but the consensus was that the success of oil prospecting in the region, and the possible location of a new BOAC air terminal, would ensure a steady stream of Kingsway customers.<sup>41</sup>



Figure 10: New Kingsway store Ibadan UAC Photographs Accession, 1998/11-17  
Reproduced with kind permission of Unilever from an original in Unilever Archives



Figure 11: New Kingsway store Apapa, UAC 1/11/10/1/9  
Reproduced with kind permission of Unilever from an original in Unilever Archives



Figure 12: New Kingsway store, Port Harcourt, 1963 UAC/2/10/b1/8/1/6  
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Yet, as at Accra, political considerations were also central: the development of a new store in each of the East and West regions to accompany the existing stores in Lagos and the Northern Region suggests Kingsway's leadership were aware of the need to satisfy the regional ambitions of Nigeria's states.<sup>42</sup> These stores were also used explicitly by the UAC to demonstrate its continued loyalty to Nigeria post-independence, with the Port Harcourt store greeted by the UAC Board in London as a 'triumphant [...] counter to the many accusations of withdrawal and disinvestment etc'.<sup>43</sup> Public relations exercises and advertising were utilised to both emphasise the luxury and modernity of these new stores, arguably long a mainstay of Kingsway's advertising, and to make the stores attractive to new African clientele.



Figure 13: Kingsway customers, 1970 UAC Box 22, 2182  
Reproduced with kind permission of Unilever from an original in Unilever Archives



But a new element in its advertising sought to tie the store to their local contexts: a newspaper article written by the UAC's publicist and 'fashion expert' Eleanor McDonald described a visit around the new store in Ibadan:

*The view of the staircase is most impressive! It has an air of lightness and airiness which is fascinating and enables you to see from one side of the store to the other. This has been achieved by a modern architectural technique... up the stairs you go, looking down on the fountain playing its wide, fern-lined bowl. This fountain has already acquired the Yoruba name for flowing water – Orisun...<sup>44</sup>*

All three of the new Nigerian stores also marked a major stylistic departure for both Kingsway Stores, and the architects at TP Bennett & Partners who undertook their design. The Accra Store has been written about as an avatar of a new kind of modernity and modernism in decolonising Ghana.<sup>45</sup> This reading is supported by the building's materiality: its glazed exterior, containing an air-conditioned interior, marked a departure from the pierced concrete facades that

defined the 'tropical modernist' work of British architects in late colonial West Africa. Yet, in stylistic terms, the building was somewhat outmoded for its date. Formally, its architects had drawn heavily from Peter Moro's elevational treatments for the Royal Festival Hall (London, 1951) something seen in its extruded central section and porthole windows.<sup>46</sup>

When compared with the Accra store it is clear that the later stores built in Nigeria are less reliant on specific European models. Instead, they show an attempt to respond to locality through their decorative forms. All three stores make use of pattern – at Ibadan through tile cladding and at Port Harcourt and Apapa through the use of highly elaborate pre-cast concrete screens. Each is a response to a specific urban site, with both Ibadan and Apapa prominently taking advantage of corner sites in important urban locales.

## Post-Independence Visibility

Yet, these stores also suggested a hint of the UAC's unease at political independence. These grand new stores were intended to both underline the importance of the UAC's contribution to prestigious new urban environments that connoted developmental and economic growth, whilst also serving to reinforce the inherent differences between Kingsway trade, undertaken from these prestigious department stores, and the kinds of retail trade undertaken by indigenous retailers, which the UAC was keen to disassociate itself from. These luxuriously outfitted department stores therefore reflected the UAC's 'concern to keep Kingsway's activities beyond the level of any aspiring Nigerian or Ghanaian retailers, thereby seeking to avoid political criticisms [we are] anxious not to let Kingsway appear to be syphoning off any of the retail distribution activity traditionally the prerogative of indigenous market traders'.<sup>47</sup> This is made explicit in contemporary advertising for the Kingsway chain, which contrasted the scale and grandeur of the Kingsway

store in Lagos with a small sketch drawing of the premises of a 'typical African owned retail stall'.<sup>48</sup>

The same concern to instrumentalise the visibility of the Kingsway chain to benefit the UAC group's PR can be seen in the highly publicised and choreographed sale of shares in both Kingsway Nigeria and Kingsway Ghana undertaken in

the late 1960s. In common with the localisation agenda pursued by the UAC as a whole. The Kingsway business was split into two separate companies, Kingsway Ghana and Kingsway Nigeria, registered in their respective countries in the early 1960s. But, in a distinct departure from the forms of localisation undertaken during the actual ends of empire in the late 1950s, a decade later

*A Career with The United Africa Company in West Africa*

*(Right) A typical African owned retail store*

*(Below) One of the Company's modern departmental stores, Kingsway, Lagos*



Figure 14: *A career with UAC: Kingsway versus local traders* no date, c. 1950s, UAC/1/11/18/2/23  
Reproduced with kind permission of Unilever from an original in Unilever Archives



Figure 15: UAC Photos Box 23 2201 Kingsway Ghana AGM 1977  
Reproduced with kind permission of Unilever from an original in Unilever Archives

the further step of actually Africanising the company ownership through a share issue was undertaken.

In both cases, the rationale for this move was less to raise capital for expansion – the usual reason for a share issue. Indeed, concerns were raised that issuing too many shares in Kingsway Ghana would ‘embarrass the company with a surfeit of cash’, for which it had no purpose.<sup>49</sup> Instead, the share issue was undertaken for its

public relations value. The UAC Board were explicit on this point, a minute recorded during a meeting discussing Kingsway Nigeria noted that ‘the main reason for the issue was to identify Kingsway Stores with the population to such an extent that it did not become a target for unpleasant legislation.... Our vulnerability to criticism at high levels was rising rapidly’.<sup>50</sup> So whilst the UAC had strongly resisted the Africanisation of its business ownership in the 1950s, by the late 1960s in a context of

indigenisation of business legislation, this had become not only politically expedient, but politically necessary.

In Ghana, discussion about the benefits of a Kingsway stock floatation were on-going from the early 1960s but were postponed when the Nkrumah government signalled that it was uncomfortable with individual citizens owning shares.<sup>51</sup> The idea was then revisited after the 1966 coup that toppled Nkrumah and his Convention

People's Party government. The UAC broadly welcomed the coup, at least initially, for the retail policies of the mature CPP Government – stringent import controls through a complicated system of licences and the proposed nationalisation of retail outlets – were inimical to the UAC, and in particular Kingsway's, operation.<sup>52</sup> Unsurprisingly, then, the UAC board found that the new political situation in Ghana 'very encouraging', especially after a meeting with delegates from the new regime's political committee in London, who 'were prepared to talk in terms of the need to assure investors about the remittance of dividends'.<sup>53</sup> The idea of building a high-profile new building to signal the UAC's commitment to the new political dispensation was mooted, but quickly abandoned. Instead, the UAC of Ghana proposed that the stock floatation of Kingsway Ghana would achieve the same ends: the UAC board noted on the 29th of November 1966 that 'the public relations value [of a share issue] might even be higher than when last considered'.<sup>54</sup> By the spring of 1967, the Chairman of the Economic Committee of the military government approved the share issue, and the sale of shares was underway.<sup>55</sup>

In Nigeria, where both the federal and state governments were pursuing the Nigerisation of businesses through new legislation, a share issue was felt equally necessary at this time. The UAC initially feared that a share issue in the Kingsway Nigeria might be 'heavily undersubscribed [as] we would be offering shares on the basis of five years of consistent losses', but were reassured by the Secretary to the Lagos Stock Exchange, who reported that prospective shareholders would be unlikely to read the share prospectus in detail, 'and if they did they would not believe it', but would likely buy shares anyway on the basis of 'the prestige and reputation of Kingsway'.<sup>56</sup> Accordingly, at the same moment as Kingsway Ghana was floated in Accra, Kingsway Stores of Nigeria shares were listed for sale in Lagos.

The highly publicised sale of shares proved one PR vehicle for the UAC, telegraphing its continued commitment to Ghana and Nigeria whilst also diversifying and indigenising its ownership base, these were thus accorded lavish coverage in local newspapers. The shareholder's Annual

General Meeting proved another opportunity to hammer these messages home. At the 1970 AGM of Kingsway Ghana, the Chairman took the opportunity to address the government directly by praising a recent liberalisation of retail licences, emphasising the positive relations between Kingsway and trade unions, and emphasising Kingsway's planned investment in new stores.<sup>57</sup> That the AGM was a tightly stage-managed piece of theatre is suggested by an exchange of memos in the weeks after, with one Kingsway executive summing up the AGM: 'considering the amount of work which went into the exercise, the occasion was, if anything something of an anti-climax [...] but it is very much to be preferred from the chaos and misunderstanding which could easily arise from lack of preparation', and another suggesting that 'next year consideration might be given to the vote of thanks appearing to be a spontaneous gesture from the floor'.<sup>58</sup>

By 1969, it was concluded that the share issue in the Kingsway Stores of Ghana was 'by all accounts of great PR benefit to the group and has certainly

bought us some time, politically, to consider our next step', suggesting that the sale of shares in one small but high-profile constituent company of the UAC group had allowed the UAC as a whole to forestall wider questions about the company's ownership.<sup>59</sup> It is also notable that when the Ghanaian government brought in indigenisation of retail legislation in 1970, the Ghanaian Business Promotion Act, both the UAC and Kingsway Ltd. were exempted from the restrictive decrees that the act contained, perhaps suggesting that the PR exercises undertaken as part of the stock floatation had worked to present Kingsway in a positive light.<sup>60</sup>

Indeed, as the 1960s and 1970s progressed and the political stability of Nigeria and Ghana could less and less be taken for granted, Kingsway's management sought to increase the visibility of the Kingsway chain in the belief that it was beneficial to the UAC's image in West Africa as a whole.<sup>61</sup> Unprofitable stores were maintained in areas 'where the group reputation would not stand withdrawal', whilst new stores were opened in locations where other UAC businesses had recently

closed.<sup>62</sup> Store openings were increasingly lavish affairs, especially in the wake of recent regime changes: In Nigeria, the opening of a new store building at Port Harcourt was attended by the State Commissioner for Trade and Economic Development, S. N. Ohaka, and the Chief Judge of the Rivers State, Ambrose Allagoa, standing in for the Military Governor of

Rivers State who had originally been scheduled to appear, whilst a new store in Benin City was opened by Colonel S. Apolo, Commander of the 4th Infantry Brigade.<sup>63</sup> A gently anarchic cartoon in the Kingsway Nigeria in-house magazine, *Kayline*, might suggest that Kingsway staff looked somewhat askance at these displays of deference to the local representatives of military regimes.



Figure 16 Kingsway *Kayline* cartoon, 1979, UAC/2/10/b2/3/1  
Reproduced with kind permission of Unilever from an original in Unilever Archives



Figure 17 Kingsway shopper, 1970, UAC Box 22, 2182

Reproduced with kind permission of Unilever from an original in Unilever Archives

The 1970s saw continued expansion for the Kingsway chain. The twin forces of 'increasing prosperity' and 'rapidly raising its retail standards', saw increased competition for Kingsway through the emergence of indigenous owned retailers serving upper class customers, especially in Nigeria.<sup>64</sup> But somewhat paradoxically this activity 'benefit[ed] Kingsway by popularising sophisticated retail services'.<sup>65</sup> The indigenous Nigerian customer base continued to grow, with the Kingsway management noted approvingly that Nigerian customers drove expansion in trade in Port Harcourt and Benin City. At the same time, the 1970s saw Kingsway management reorient development plans away from 'large city centre units' to 'smaller suburban' developments.<sup>66</sup> The form of its buildings changed at this time too, building retail units with a food hall and a restricted range of clothes and homeware all located on a single, uninterrupted shopping floor, explicitly modelled on the British retailer Marks & Spencer.<sup>67</sup> Older stores in provincial towns, which had been housed in converted bungalows or ramshackle

collections of sheds, were increasingly redeveloped in the 1970s along this model.

Expansion continued too. In Nigeria, new stores were opened in areas experiencing growth from the success of the oil industry: the development of a store in Warri, for example, where Shell had expanded its operations, was a key concern for Kingsway. New store developments were also concentrated in the affluent Lagos suburbs with their 'population of both expatriate and Nigerian executives'.<sup>68</sup> This was paralleled in Ghana, where new Kingsway branches were opened in the Accra suburbs of Kaneshie and Kotobabi in the 1970s. Universities were also increasingly targeted, Kingsway Nigeria constructed a new store on a site adjacent to the University of Ibadan Campus, and was given the contract to run a small 'buttery' operation on the campus at Ibadan.<sup>69</sup> Kingsway Stores of Ghana's management was particularly keen to concentrate its retailing activities in areas near university campuses, noting that 'today's students will form tomorrow's leaders of opinion, and it

is in Kingsway's interest nationwide that such students should have reason for holding Kingsway in high regard when they embark on their careers', Kingsway thus ran a small store on the University of Ghana campus.<sup>70</sup> A similar logic perhaps governed Kingsway's decision to operate at Burma Camp, the principal base of the Ghanaian Army in the Accra region, which saw expansion after the 1967 military coup, providing Kingsway with 'very much a captive market'.<sup>71</sup>

Kingsway's management noted that customer expectations of a Kingsway store had shifted, and a new emphasis on comfort as opposed to grand architectural expression had emerged: by the later 1960s it was noted that 'nowadays, customers set more value on air-conditioning than impressive facades or déco'.<sup>72</sup> Architectural briefs issued for store developments increasingly emphasised simplicity and servicing: when developing the new store at Kotobabi in 1969, Kingsway management noted that 'a single storey building of simple construction of 4,000 square feet will satisfy our needs'.<sup>73</sup> The brief to the architects outlined that 'the

building itself should be inexpensive with an interesting and attractive looking façade requiring little or no maintenance'.<sup>74</sup> A feasibility report

undertaken by the appointed architects, Design Group Ghana, noted that studies could be taken to maximise passive cooling of the building through its siting,

to which the Kingsway management replied: 'we want a simple, inexpensive, wholly functional building [...] you may have to chivvy Design Group away from

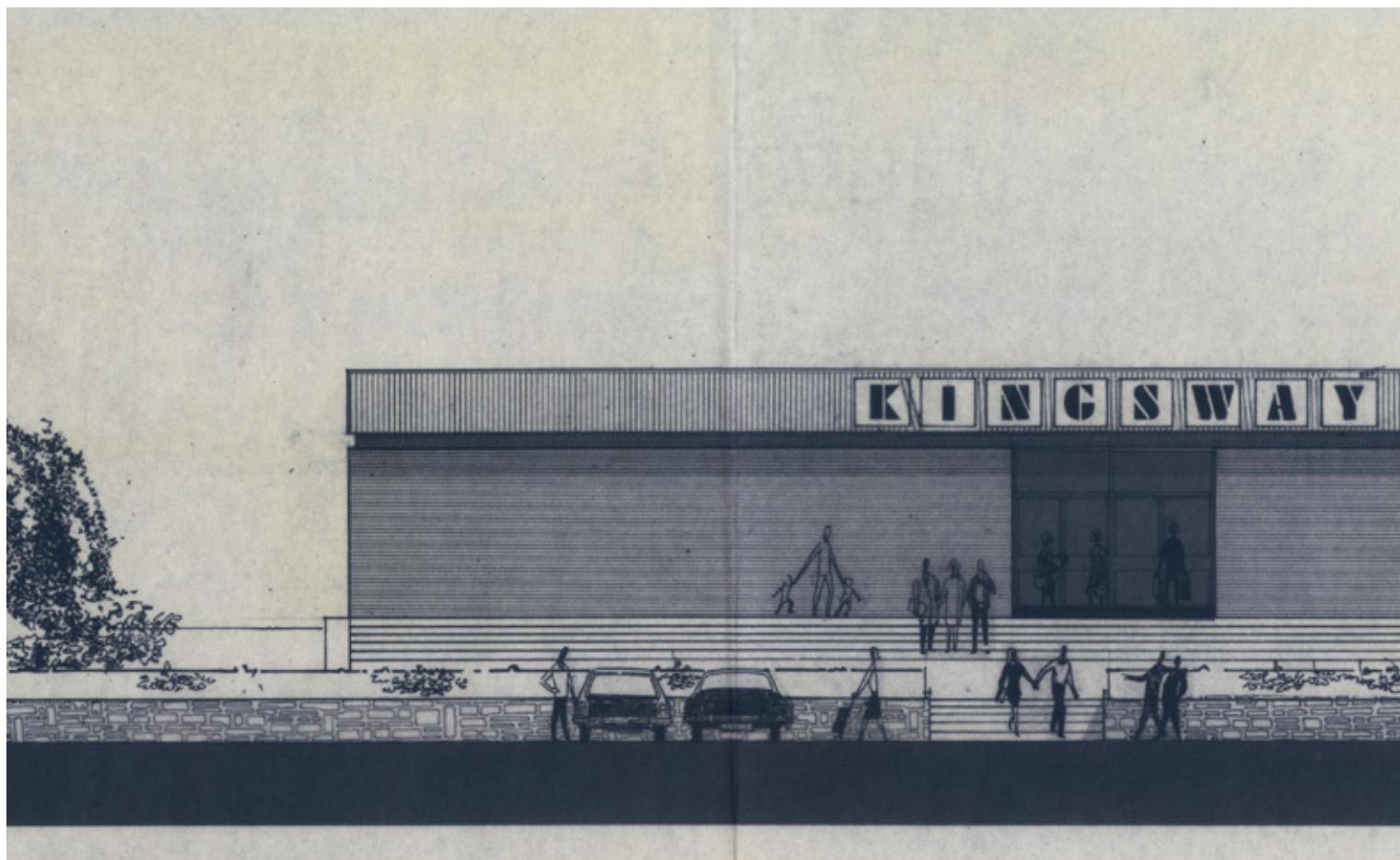
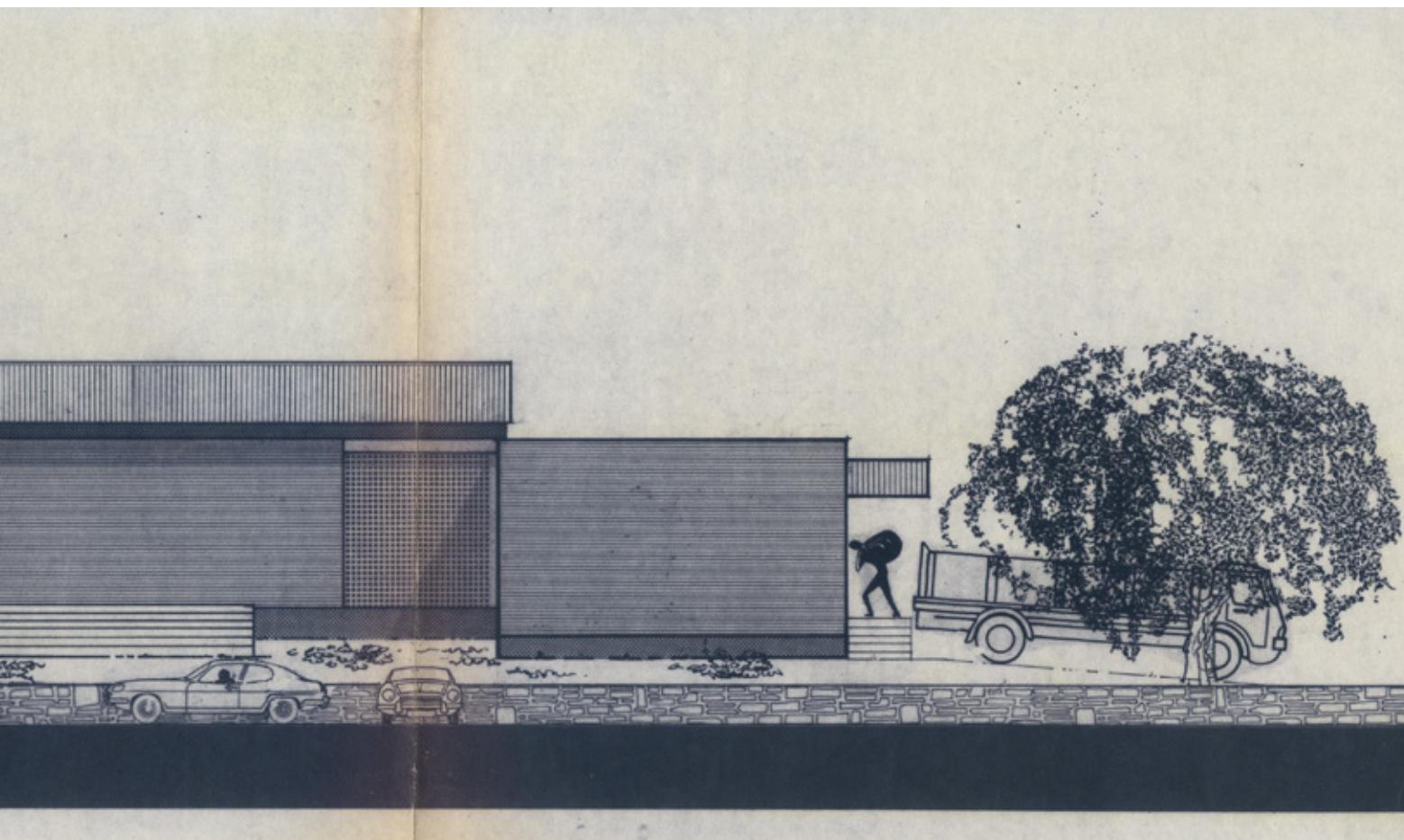


Figure 18: Kingsway Kanesie elevational drawing, UAC /2/10 /b3/4 /2 /4  
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the niceties of theory'.<sup>75</sup> In an air-conditioned age, the shibboleths of the tropical modernists of the 1950s, who had preached careful studies of site

climatic conditions to promote passive cooling had become a distraction from Kingsway's need for quickly produced, attractive yet inexpensive buildings.



## Joint Ventures and Wiley Chiefs

Kingsway's shift in architectural expression, away from grand urban department stores to single-storey, highly serviced buildings in affluent suburban locations was therefore framed by the UAC as a response to the needs of its newly Africanised customer base.<sup>76</sup> Yet, this shift created tension with local political and landed elites in both Ghana and Nigeria. Although Kingsway's management were keen to reassure local policy makers that this change in emphasis from department store to supermarket developments did not connote any diminution in the quality of produce or service offered, local elites remained stubbornly wedded to the notion of the multi-storeyed department store on a prominent urban site as a symbol of regional prestige.<sup>77</sup>

In some instances, the UAC sought out joint-ventures with local property developers to build larger mixed-use developments incorporating a floor of retail-space pre-leased to Kingsway. an example was the store built in Benin City, which was planned from the late 1960s. Benin City had recently been elevated in

could be taken to maximise passive cooling of the building through its siting, to which the Kingsway management replied: 'we want a simple, inexpensive, status as the capital of Nigeria's newly created Mid-West State. The local state government had thus commissioned an ambitious masterplan with which to house the new state-government apparatus. This was designed by John Poulson & Associates, the infamous Yorkshire based practice whose principal was arrested for bribing public officials in return for work in 1972, and who was subsequently imprisoned for the crime in 1974.<sup>78</sup> One of Poulson's bribees was a member of the British House of Parliament's West Africa Committee, and it may have been through this connection that Poulson's practice obtained the commission for the Benin City Masterplan.

A draft plan was published in 1969. This consisted of new commercial and public buildings housed on an ambitious layout of piazzas and avenues, located within an urban ring road. The Poulson associate in charge of developing the plan had spent three months in Benin City, but nevertheless the indicative

plan owed much to contemporary British models, and the perspective views prepared by the Poulson practice show designs of towers and slab block much like the jazzily detailed brutalism that commercial architects produced in Britain at the time. The presence of palm trees and figures in exoticised garb are the only indications that these images were prepared for Benin City, and not Basingstoke or Burnley. The perspective views even include a copy of Stevenage's clock tower in the proposed central piazza.<sup>79</sup>

The Poulson planners had earmarked a large site for a five-storey department store in the city centre, which local officials intended for Kingsway. Whilst the Kingsway management were keen to open a store in Benin City, noting that the closest Kingsway store, located at Sapele, was 'in the doldrums', whilst Benin City 'goes from strength to strength', they proposed opening a single-storey supermarket development and not a large, multi-storey department store.<sup>80</sup> Protracted negotiations followed, with neither side giving much ground.

Eventually, to circumvent this impasse, Kingsway entered a joint venture with a prominent local businessman, Chief Franco Osagie. Kingsway's leadership in England recognised that Chief Osagie would 'probably not be so hindered' in his negotiations for a single-storey development with the Governor of Mid-Western State.<sup>81</sup> Alternatively, if these negotiations were unsuccessful in agreeing to a single-storey development, Osagie could be persuaded to speculatively develop the site set aside for Kingsway in the development plan as office space, whilst agreeing to lease a floor to Kingsway.<sup>82</sup> This is what eventually occurred: by 1973, the Chief had obtained a site in the 'heart of the commercial area of the city', next to the general post office and the Central Bank, from the Mid-West regional government and was developing it with 1040 m<sup>2</sup> of retail space for Kingsway and, 'to comply with the authorities wishes', extra floors of speculative office space.<sup>83</sup> The completed building, designed by Vivian Uku, a graduate of the University of Sheffield and the Architectural Association's Tropical Architecture School, was opened with

much fanfare in 1975, with a speech by a local politician that approvingly noted that an indigenous architect and developer were behind the scheme for Kingsway.<sup>84</sup> Contemporary store developments in Port Harcourt, to replace a store damaged during the Biafran War, and at Warri, rapidly developing as the centre of Shell's Nigerian operations, were similarly enacted through joint developments with Nigerian property developers.

Local developers were clearly able to hold their own against the Kingsway organisation. Chief Osagie proved adept at steering his relationship with Kingsway in Benin City to greater profits for himself, using knowledge obtained from another Nigerian businessman who rented property to the UAC to drive a hard bargain over the rental price Kingsway would pay for its completed development.<sup>85</sup> Similarly, in Warri, where the new Kingsway store was built in partnership with a local businessman, Chief Edewor, the construction contract was awarded to the contractor Pedrochi. Kingsway's directors had not consented to this, and preferred to see the contract go elsewhere, but Pedrochi

had won the contract through an intervention by the 'wily chief', who was also a member of the Pedrochi Board of Directors.<sup>86</sup>

Nevertheless, these joint ventures provided a sort of protection for Kingsway, by further identifying the chain with local business elites and enmeshing the Kingsway chain in local business networks, something that became more important as indigenisation legislation increasingly impacted the Kingsway and UAC businesses.<sup>87</sup> Kingsway Nigeria even mooted the idea of joint developments with government itself: noting in the mid-1970s that 'everyone expects numerous prestige buildings to be erected all over Nigeria, at least one in each state Capital, and it would be a tremendous feather in Kingsway's cap if each of these buildings could in due course contain a Kingsway on the ground floor almost as a standard pattern'.<sup>88</sup> Nothing seems to have come from this ambition, however. But it is clear from the property files that collaboration with local property developers was an increasingly important aspect of UAC development in this period.

## Architectural Promissory Notes

During a tour of Kingsway premises in Ghana in 1967, a UAC executive noted: 'we avoided calling on the Asantehene because I did not want to become involved in a discussion of our future plans for the Kumasi store'.<sup>89</sup> The protracted discussions around the redevelopment of the Kumasi Kingsway store illustrates how Kingsway and the UAC's leadership sought to forestall enacting large-scale and multi-storey store developments for as long as possible, even whilst commissioning architectural plans.

Kingsway Kumasi was opened by F. A. Swanzy in around 1916, a year or so after the Accra Kingsway. It was located on a prominent site in central Kumasi, opposite the Post Office and the branches of Barclays and the British Bank of West Africa, and was therefore located at the very nexus of colonial administration and expatriate capitalism. The store was housed, as most early twentieth-century colonial retail buildings were, in a two-storey structure with a vaguely classical concrete veranda and a corrugated iron roof. By the post-war period, the building was looking increasingly tired and

reconstruction of the store was first mooted in 1949.<sup>90</sup> Regional management, who were 'thoroughly ashamed of the image presented by the Kingsway Stores branch in Kumasi' were in favour of redevelopment.<sup>91</sup> But the national management in Accra, and the UAC Board in Britain, were less convinced of the need to address the problem, with an executive of the Kingsway division in Manchester concluding that the store was 'not very satisfactory in many ways [but] it was at least earning a worthwhile profit and that a new building would affect our ability to maintain that', referencing the fact that the cost of capital investment would be set against the store's profits.<sup>92</sup>

This tension between advocates for and against the redevelopment of the Kumasi store (which was described by contemporary Kingsway managers as 'schizophrenic') persisted throughout the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>93</sup> Advocates for redevelopment argued that Kumasi would see economic expansion 'after its years of depression under the Nkrumah regime', whilst those against pointed to the profitable performance of the existing store, which faced little competition in the region.<sup>94</sup>

By 1970, however, the issue had become increasingly pressing. A memorandum dated the 13th of May 1970 noted:

*I was in Kumasi on Monday the 11th, and everybody there including the Asantehene, the Chairman of the Kumasi City Council, the Chief Executive of the Regional Administration [...] left us in no doubt that they regarded a new Kingsway as top priority in Kumasi development. As you know, I have had plenty of experience in staving off such demands and assure you that on this occasion the pressure was quite considerable [...] I know that our capital expenditure should be dictated by commercial judgement but one might almost say that the Kingsway Kumasi Store controversy has reached the point where we may have to accept that moral and civic duty must take precedence.<sup>95</sup>*

This pressure was emanating from the local council. Council representatives met regularly with the Asantehene and were 'putting pressure to bear on traditional heads, chiefs, paramount chiefs, firms – both large and small – with this idea of making Kumasi a show piece regardless

of any economic viability'.<sup>96</sup> Local planners were especially keen to transform Harper Road, which sat adjacent to the Kingsway Store, and were encouraging local and expatriate businesses to build multi-storey office and shop complexes along its length, perhaps in emulation of Accra's Independence Avenue.

A 1972 meeting with the Regional Commissioner and the Town Planning Officers in Kumasi opened with the Commissioner 'deplored' the state of the Kumasi branch, 'he continued that the profits made by the firm throughout these years were enormous, and it would only be fair if they ploughed back some of these profits into new buildings', suggesting that local officials were using the UAC's own architectural propaganda to argue for further investment in their areas of jurisdiction.<sup>97</sup> In a thinly veiled threat, the Town Clerk described the Kingsway building as 'an eyesore' and 'warned' Kingsway that if improvements were not made, he would pressure the Asantehene to withdraw Kingsway's lease.<sup>98</sup>

Accordingly, Kingsway engaged an Accra based architectural practice, Deweger, Gunter & Partners to provide

proposals for the store's redevelopment. They concluded that for an expenditure of 300,000 cedis it would be possible to 'facelift' the existing store, but that it would

'not be money well spent', as a full redevelopment would likely be required in the not-too-distant future. Kingsway then opened negotiations with adjacent site owners for a larger, joint venture

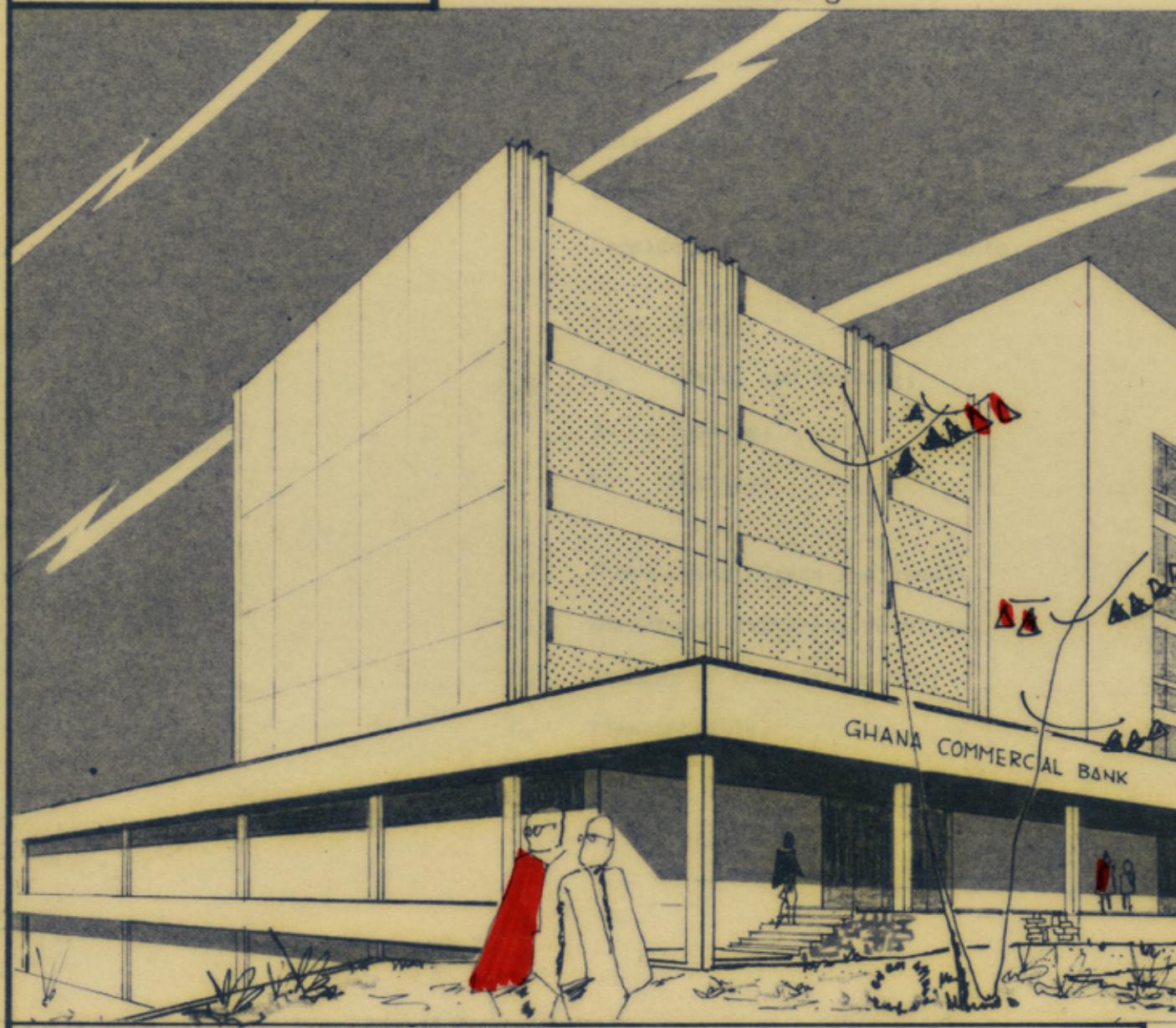


Figure 19: Swanzy Kumasi store, 1912, later Kingsway, UAC 1/11/9/62/108  
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**HARPER—ROAD  
DEVELOPMENT  
KUMASI**

Sketch-Proposal

- Requirements
- Considerations
- Cost Estimations
- Drawings



**DEWEGER, GRUTER & PARTNERS ARCHITECTS & CONSULTING ENGINEERS**



of its site, and by October of 1973 was developing plans with the Ghana Commercial Bank for a development providing one floor of retail space for Kingsway and several office floors for the bank.

This was felt by Kingsway division in London to be propitious: 'if this is to be a bank building this imparts an even better tone to the whole thing, banks usually seek premises of a high standard and their association with Kingsway tends to create the right image'.<sup>100</sup> A minor bump in the smooth development of these plans was encountered in the December of 1973, when the Ghana Commercial Bank raised concerns that it would be 'politically unwise' for the bank to finance 'a project on behalf of an expatriate organisation', but this was overcome by the bank and Kingsway proposing a joint holding company for the development with a nominal shareholding owned by the UAC.<sup>101</sup>

By the summer of 1974, Deweger, Gunter & Partners had developed plans for a substantial complex – a two-storey podium providing a shopping

floor for Kingsway and car parking, and four-storeys of office space for the bank above. These plans were disseminated through a glossy brochure, and finely detailed perspective views: but the development went no further than these images. There is no clear indication in the archive as to when or why the plans were shelved, the files pertaining to them simply peter out, but the fact that the architects were given clear instructions not to go beyond 'the feasibility stage', and that the Kingsway Ghana chairman David Akinakwah described a meeting with Dewegers to discuss the proposals as 'purely an academic exercise... there is no obligation whatsoever to commit ourselves to any further action', suggests that the plans were never likely to be implemented in the first place.<sup>102</sup> As early as 1969, a memorandum relating to the Kumasi redevelopment had noted, 'this is a PR matter [...] I see no reason why we should not spend some money on producing a draft scheme and getting it costed [...] at the same time, I would see no harm in deferring the commencement of a new building'.<sup>103</sup>

The use of architectural promissory notes in this fashion was not an isolated case. In the late-1960s an executive with the UAC in London made an extensive tour of Kingsway sites in West Africa. In Kaduna, northern Nigeria, he was unimpressed with what he found. Beyond its grand entrance tower, the Kaduna store was 'the most extraordinary mix of floor levels, bodged roofs, mud-brick extensions and general "making-do", that one can imagine'.<sup>104</sup> The 'lack of space and inconvenient siting' of the Kaduna store had long been a cause of complaint, and accordingly redevelopment plans for Kingsway Kaduna had been underway for some time.<sup>105</sup>

A partner from TP Bennett & Partners had been instructed to prepare an 'artist's impression' for a new Kaduna store, but the UAC Board noted that redevelopment in Kaduna 'was amongst our projects but not amongst our plans', and 'the emphasis was rather on holding it back than pushing it forward'.<sup>106</sup> Given the recognition that 'any development in Kaduna at this stage will worsen the already unsatisfactory profit position' of the

UAC in Nigeria, it might seem curious that Kingsway would hire TP Bennett & Partners to draw up elevational studies and a perspective view of a store that the company had no intention of building.<sup>107</sup> But, as with Kingsway Ghana at Kumasi, Kingsway Nigeria were under immense political pressure to redevelop in Kaduna. A letter to a Kingsway Nigeria manager noted:

*"we appreciate that you have been placed in a difficult position as a result of the continual pressure exerted by the premier of the Northern Region for a new Kingsway store to be opened in Kaduna, and that continued failure to meet his wishes in some degree could be prejudicial not only to Kingsway interests but those of the entire UAC group in Nigeria".<sup>108</sup>*

The artist's impression of a new Kingsway store in Kaduna may therefore have been commissioned in an effort to mollify the Northern Nigerian elite with vague proposals for a future development.<sup>109</sup>

Publicly, Kingsway was apt to frame this change in its architectural form as being

a response to customer demands. Yet, private and internal correspondence noted a distinct preference against investing in expensive buildings: by 1970 it was recognised that in Nigeria it was 'group policy not to become involved in capital projects involving bricks and mortar', whilst Kingsway Ghana noted its intention to 'minimise capital expenditure on buildings'.<sup>110</sup> These decisions were taken against a background of increasing political instability across the region. Kwame Nkrumah was deposed in a military coup in 1966, the government led by the Sierra Leone People's Party in 1967, the same year that saw the first outbreaks of violence in Nigeria that soon coalesced into the Biafran War: as one Kingsway executive noted rather mournfully, in West Africa 'governments tend to come, and governments tend to go'.<sup>111</sup> At the same time, the late 1960s and 1970s saw growing vocal hostility to British businesses in the region, import-substitution policies were promulgated by nationalist regimes, and faltering global commodities prices (at least beyond oil producing regions), made economic growth less certain.<sup>112</sup> Kingsway's and the UAC's business

operations were increasingly hedged by indigenisation decrees and its financial practices were increasingly scrutinised by African regimes.<sup>113</sup>

In a region increasingly prone to political instability, an inclement public relations climate, and uncertain economic growth, having minimal capital tied up in expensive urban department stores made increasingly sound commercial sense. In these circumstances, building small, building through intermediaries, or postponing building all together, became central architectural strategies of the UAC.

### **Conclusion: Architectures of Divestment**

In 1985, the UAC of Nigeria commenced the redevelopment of a site in the affluent Lagos suburb of Ikoyi. The site – which had contained two semi-detached and two detached houses built for UAC managers in the 1950s when Ikoyi was still Lagos's European Reservation – was redeveloped as a block of 24 luxury flats, 'complete with swimming pool and separate boys quarters' surrounded by high walls combining 'the high class accommodation and amenities with security demanded by residents in Ikoyi'.<sup>114</sup> The development was conceived as a means to invest the UAC of Nigeria's Naira reserves, 'under constant threat from creeping devaluation', and was therefore both a speculative venture and a 'hedge against inflation'.<sup>115</sup>

This development also reflected the company's desire to make the use of increasingly 'unutilised sites'.<sup>116</sup> The Ikoyi development was overseen by a newly formed Property Division – instituted to manage the UAC's

disparate land holdings in West Africa, with the intention to 'optimise underlying capital values and to obtain the benefit of inflation protected revenue'.<sup>117</sup> The Property Division's development of UAC sites was a key aspect of this strategy and was framed as part of the longer term future of the UAC Group in West Africa as a whole.<sup>118</sup> Yet, disposal, rationalisation, and retrenchment were key elements within the Property Division's operational remit: its strategy document noted that 'disposal should [now] be a positive policy where no long term need is foreseen'.<sup>119</sup> This reflects the UAC general position in the 1980s: publicly the group was committed to a future in West Africa even as it was increasingly divesting itself of businesses, assets and land. The Property Division's task seems to have been to wring as much profit out of land assets during this process of UAC divestment and disengagement, something seen in the development it oversaw at Ikoyi.<sup>120</sup>

New factories, showrooms, office blocks, and department stores were built throughout West Africa. But by the 1970s the group was increasingly

unwilling to commit itself to 'bricks and mortar' investment. In uncertain political climate, in which businesses operated alongside coups, military regimes and, in the case of Nigeria, civil war; in an uncertain economic climate in which currencies were increasingly prone to devaluation, refloating, and periods of non-convertibility; and in an uncertain legislative climate in which business ownership, operations, and profit and dividend flows were increasingly subjected to indigenisation decrees, the UAC could better assure its profitability and agility by building small, easily capitalised buildings on rented sites. The Kingsway stores capture this shift in architectural expression. In the early 1960s, the UAC invested in grand new store buildings in Accra, Ibadan, Port Harcourt, and Apapa. By the 1970s the chain instead sought to build small, single-storey stores in affluent suburban locations.

Yet, this change in emphasis was unpopular with local political forces who remained deeply wedded to the grand developmentalist visions that had accompanied independence. The UAC was, here, a victim of its own

narrativisation of its architectural contribution to development. By the early 1970s, as it sought to avoid committing capital reserves to new buildings, its directors may have come to regret the success of its public relations campaigns of a decade before: 'Fine Buildings Enrich a Country', which had circulated alongside images of UAC buildings throughout the years of independence, was, in the later 1960s and 1970s, no longer a politically expedient refrain.

In order to navigate this impasse, the UAC and the Kingsway Stores developed new configurations of architecture and development – new premises were built through intermediary indigenous property developers, or were leased through local businesses, something which served to simultaneously satisfy indigenisation decrees and the developmentalist desires of local politicians for bold architectural statements, whilst leaving the UAC unencumbered by bricks and mortar investment. Perhaps more controversially, the UAC appeared especially adept at mobilising grand

architectural visions to placate local elites whilst delaying redevelopment of increasingly dilapidated premises. Each of these architectural strategies allowed the UAC to nimbly funnel profits back to the London as it always had done under colonialism.

By the 1980s, the UAC appears to have moved to a strategy of divestment. Rationalising landholdings through the sale of sites and relinquishing leases was accompanied by limited forms of speculative development on potentially profitable sites. Architecture and development had moved from being key strategies to weather independence by framing the UAC as a partner in a wider process of economic decolonisation, to a central strategy in the process of economic divestment.

# Notes

1. Anon, 'Kingsway stores go to Cape Coast', *The Echo*, 2nd February, 1975.
2. D. Goldsworthy, 'Ghana's second republic: A post-mortem', *African Affairs*, 72, no.286 (1973), 8–25.
3. Address delivered by the Regional Commissioner Lt-Col E. A. Baidoo on the occasion of the opening of the new Kingsway store at Cape Coast, Kingsway Cape Coast, UAC/2/10/B3/4/2/3, UA. This runs slightly counter to conflicts between the UAC and Nigerian government officials over restrictions of commerce.
4. *Ibid.*
5. For an account of the development of the Accra store, see Murillo, *Market Encounters*.
6. See UAC/1/11/20/4, UA.
7. Vanessa Ogle, Erik Linstrum, Stuart Ward, Saima Nasar, Priyamvada Gopal, 'Decolonizing Britain: An exchange', *Twentieth Century British History*, 33, no. 2 (June 2022), 274–303.
8. In larger settlements, Miller's maintained separate stores for European customers via outlets prominently emblazoned with the legend 'European Department'. Quite how far the range of goods varied between the two sets of stores is unclear, but neither the architecture nor internal arrangement of the stores seems substantially different. Bianca Murillo states that the European departments were instituted by the UAC after it had taken control of the African and Eastern's retail empire, but photographs from c. 1912 clearly show that Miller's stores were using the name so it was likely therefore inherited.
9. Murillo, *Market Encounters*, 38–39.
10. Macmillan, *The Red Book of West Africa*.
11. *Ibid.*
12. Murillo, *Market Encounters*, 35. It had always been Lord Lever's ambition to dominate retail trade in West Africa, though his own chain of stores – Lever Stores 'the Woolworths of West Africa', had not been a success. See UAC/2/34/AT/1/1/1, UA.
13. In some cases, existing stores bought over by the UAC were rebranded as Kingsway Stores. The Kingsway branch in Kumasi was originally operated as a store selling imported goods by F. A. Swanzy but was rebranded as a Kingsway when the UAC absorbed Swanzy's on its formation in 1929. Little physical change appears to have accompanied this change in nomenclature, however.
14. Hausa architecture, permanent and elaborately decorated, played a role in the colonial veneration of northern Nigeria. This was especially evident in the Nigerian pavilion at the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley, which featured a full-size mock Hausa town, complete with Northern Nigerians engaged in 'traditional' crafts for the benefit of exhibition visitors. For an account of the controversy surrounding this, see: Sarah Britton, 'Come see the empire by the All-Red Route: Anti-imperialism and interwar exhibitions in Britain', *History Workshop Journal*, 69 (2010), 68–89.
15. *Mr Dale's Notes on Coast Visit*, 19th December 1967, Chairman's Notes and Correspondence Re Kingsway UAC/1/3/4/7/5, UA.
16. *Letter on the Formation of a UK Business to take Over Kingsway*, 20th November 1946, Secretarial Correspondence regarding Kingsway Stores, UAC/2/10/B1/1/3/1, UA.
17. See Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel, 'Introduction' in *Western Women in Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992), 3. Margaret Strobel, *European Women and the Second British Empire* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991) 25. The British Women's Emigration Association was formed in the 1880s to encourage 'surplus' single women to emigrate to the settler colonies and dominions, in the hope of securing 'possibilities for genteel domestic service and potentially marriage. in the 1890s the BWEA added to its message the opportunity to 'civilise' the world and secure British values in the colonies'. Colonial service had meant

there was a slight imbalance in men to women in Britain, and officials feared what would become of these 'surplus' women. At the same time, authorities in southern Africa favoured the settlement of European women in the hope that they would take domestic service jobs thus freeing African men to work in the Rand's mines.

18. Strobel, *European Women*, 21 and UAC/1/11/14/1/26, UA, 3.
19. Helen Callaway, *Gender, Culture and Empire: European Women in Colonial Nigeria* (London: Macmillan, 1987), 19.
20. Paula Jones, 'The United Africa Company in the Gold Coast/Ghana 1920–1965' (PhD. diss., University College London, 1983) though the number was still small, at only 442.
21. Laura Ann Stoler, 'Making empire respectable: The politics of race and sexual morality in 20th century colonial cultures', *American Ethnologist* 16, no. 4 (November 1989), 634–660, 640.
22. Ambe Njoh, *Planning Power: Town Planning and Social Control in Colonial Africa* (London: UCL Press, 2006), 61–66.
23. UAC Of Ghana Ltd: *Bungalow Equipment and Standard List*, UAC/2/20/3/8/1, UA.
24. The earliest cook book for Europeans in West Africa, Sylvia Leith-Ross's *West African Cookery: A Practical Guide* of 1910, written specifically for male officers embarking on tours of duty in Nigeria, had included lists of preservations that should be purchased in London prior to departure (tea, Tabasco sauce, tinned roast beef), where to buy them (at Fortnum & Mason in London, the Army & Navy Stores in Portsmouth), how to pack, store and transport them, and how to instruct an African servant in their preparation. But later generations of household instruction manuals written in the 1930s and 1940s, aimed at the colonial wife rather than her husband, assumed that the majority of British staple and luxury goods could be purchased in Africa, at least in the larger towns and cities through Kingsway, its competitors and its regional equivalents in East and Southern Africa.
25. *Odds and Ends, programme for an event at the Accra Senior Boys School February 1931*, Public Relations Box 35, UAC/1/11/13/2/2, UA.
26. UAC Board minutes 18th of Jan 1965 and Board minutes 22nd August 1966, UAC/1/1/2/1/3/11 UAC Board Minutes Relating to Kingsway 1961–1970, UA.
27. Ibid.
28. The marketing of its existing brand of European domesticity was another strand in this marketing strategy, Ewan Harrison, Iain Jackson, Irene Appeaning Addo, Oluwaseun Muraina "Kingsway Leads the Way to Modern Living: British Profit Seeking and Modernism in Ghana and Nigeria 1920-1970" *Journal of Design History*.
29. UAC/1/11/14/5/1, UA.
30. Notes from B. J. Dale on a visit to Kingsway Stores Nigeria May/June 1967, UAC/1/3/4/7/5 Chairman's Notes and Correspondence Regarding Kingsway Stores, UA. The furniture was locally manufactured on plantations owned by the African Timber and Plywood Company, another UAC subsidiary. Its design, however, was firmly Euro-American in mode.
31. As Kenny Cupers and Pritia Mieier have noted 'the visual culture of colonial development, its modernist futurism, was embraced by postcolonial governments'. Meier and Cupers, 'Infrastructure'. See also Brian McLaren, 'The postcolonial appropriation of tourist sites in Libya 1948–1969' in *Coastal Architectures and Politics of Tourism*, eds. Sibel Bozdoğan, Panayiota Pyla, and Petros Phokaides (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2022), and Ayala Levin, 'The African riviera: Tourism, infrastructure and regional development in the Ivory Coast', in *Coastal Architectures and the Politics of Tourism*, eds. Sibel Bozdoğan, Panayiota Pyla, and Petros Phokaides (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2022).
32. See Murillo, *Market Encounters* and Hess, 'Imagining architecture'. For more on Nkrumah's Accra see Jackson, 'Development visions'.

33. *In Business with Nkrumah*, Papers of Sir Frederick James Pedler, MSS.Afr.s.1814, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford
34. Ibid.
35. See *In Business with Nkrumah*, and correspondence in file, UAC/2/20/4/3/2/2, UAC of Ghana Ltd Management and Development of Properties – Kingsway Stores Accra, UA.
36. *In Business with Nkrumah*, Papers of Sir Frederick James Pedler, MSS.Afr.s.1814, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford. The development of the Accra store is richly interpreted in Murillo, *Market Encounters*.
37. *In Business with Nkrumah*, Papers of Sir Frederick James Pedler, MSS.Afr.s.1814, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford.
38. See plans in file, UAC of Ghana Ltd: Management and Development of Properties - Kingsway Stores Adjabeng Lodge, Accra, UAC/2/20/4/3/2/2 UA
39. *Memorandum from Baines to Morrant and Anderson*, 6th October 1955, UAC/2/20/4/3/2/2, UAC of Ghana Ltd Management and Development of Properties – Kingsway Stores Accra, UA.
40. *In Business with Nkrumah*, Papers of Sir Frederick James Pedler, MSS.Afr.s.1814, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford.
41. UAC Board Meeting 1st May 1961, UAC/1/1/2/1/3/11, UAC Board Minutes Relating to Kingsway 1961–1970, UA.
42. See Livsey, *Nigeria's University Age* for more on the tensions between state and federal government and how this shaped development.
43. UAC Board Meeting 25th September 1963, UAC/1/1/2/1/3/11, UAC Board Minutes Relating to Kingsway 1961–1970, UA.
44. Eleanor McDonald, 'Kingsway: Of modern structure', *The Nigerian Tribune*, 2 February, 1962.
45. See Murillo, *Market Encounters*.
46. We are grateful to Alistair Fair and Miles Glendinning for suggesting the Robert Mathew buildings at London Airport as another possible influence on the form of the design to this building during a lecture I delivered on the architecture of Kingsway stores at the University of Edinburgh in November 2023.
47. K. Weaver: *Notes for Mr Joyce Relevant to the Falomo Site*. Kingsway Stores of Nigeria Property Files - Falomo, UAC/2/10/B2/4/2/4, UA.
48. *A Career with the United Africa Company*, UAC1/11/18/2/23, UA.
49. *Kingsway Issues* Memo from Stevens to Pedler 12 August 1966 Chairman's Notes and Correspondence Re Kingsway, UAC/1/3/4/7/5, UA.
50. Ibid.
51. *History of Unilever in Ghana*, UAC 1/11/14/5/1, UA. 'Government policy', the UAC PR Department noted, 'had moved sharply to the left and the company's first attempt to offer participation to the Ghanaian public had suffered a rebuff'.
52. Certain individuals did well during this moment. Sir Patrick Fitzgerald, a former chairman of UAC Ghana, was appointed director of the government's own retailer the Ghana National Trading Company. Kingsway's management were also adept at turning import licences to their benefit, finding local suppliers or foreign supplier's not subject to licence control such as the eastern bloc. A board minute from 1964 read 'import restrictions had had an amazing effect on local production and Kingsway was beginning to build up a reputation in this field where they were persuading small manufacturers to provide goods with something slightly different from what was supplied to other people... a further interesting feature was the amount of merchandise Kingsway had succeeded in finding behind the iron curtain. The buyers were becoming increasingly enthusiastic about the goods they were finding, both in quality and price... There had been a certain amount of education of Eastern bloc suppliers by visitors from Ghana, notably our own representatives.' Similarly, licensing regimes could also prove profitable to Kingsway. A note on the possibility of the extension of import licences in Nigeria read 'Either Nigeria's position will right itself to the point where licensing becomes less restrictive, in which case we should be able to produce steadily improving profits;

or licensing will remain in force and inflation and increased sales/margins from lower unit throughput at higher values will follow. As our experience in Ghana has shown, profits tend to increase in these circumstances' *Dales Notes on a Visit to Nigeria*, 31st May 1968, UAC/1/3/4/7/5, UA.

53. *Meeting of the UAC Board 22nd August 1966*, UAC Board Minutes relating to Kingsway 1961 –1970, UAC/1/1/2/1/3/11, UA.
54. *Meeting of the UAC Board 25th April 1966*, UAC Board Minutes relating to Kingsway 1961 – 1970, UAC/1/1/2/1/3/11, UA.
55. *Meeting of the UAC Board 27th February 1967*, UAC Board Minutes relating to Kingsway 1961–1970, UAC/1/1/2/1/3/11, UA. The NLC government was concerned to ensure that the shares were not purchased by ' Syrians and Lebanese' and was investigating legislation to avoid this happening.
56. Ibid.
57. *Speech by the Chairman of Kingsway Stores of Ghana to the Kingsway Ghana AGM*, 8th April 1970, UAC2/10/B1/1/7/4, UA.
58. *Memo from Baxter to Dale*, 22nd April 1970 and Memo from Baxter to Mensah 28th April 1970, UAC2/10/B1/1/7/4, UA.
59. *Africanisation of Distributive Trade Ghana*, Memorandum from JV Nicholas to FA Thomas, 2nd Jan 1969, Corporate Planning Box 9, UAC/1/9/5/5, UA.
60. The Act did not apply to foreign owned companies with a turnover above a certain threshold, and therefore primarily targeted smaller Syrian, Lebanese, and Greek owned retailers – Danawi Brothers and the Four Seasons Supermarket on Liberty Avenue in Accra were two such Kingsway competitors forced to close. Kingsway leadership noted 'we shall to a very large extent be benefitted through increased traffic to our selling outlets'. see *Correspondence in file*, UAC2/10/B1/1/7/4, UA.
61. The closure of the Kingsway in Freetown, Sierra Leone was carefully weighed against the political ramifications, involving discussions between the President of the Sierra Leone, the British Commission and the UAC's management. See telegram to FCO 11 February 1970 and Letter from SJL Oliver at the Freetown High Commission to John Wilson at the FCO 12th February 1970, United Africa Company in Sierra Leone FCO 65/855, The National Archives, Kew.
62. Mr Dale's Notes on a visit to Bathurst, 10th May 1968, Chairman's Notes and Correspondence Re Kingsway UAC/1/3/4/7/5, and *Report on Replacement Store at Kaduna*, March 1981, Kingsway Stores of Nigeria Kaduna Property File, UAC/2/10/B2/4/2/8, UA.
63. *Kayline: A Quarterly House Journal of the Kingsway Stores Nigeria* 8, no.4 (December 1978), UAC/2/10/B2/3/3/1, UA. It has been difficult to source information on S. N. Ohaka other than he was a founder of the Ionic Lodge, see <https://districtgrandlodgeofnigeria.com/ionic-lodge/>
64. Annual Operating Plan, Kingsway Nigeria, UAC/2/10/B2/2/2/1, UA
65. Ibid.
66. K. Weaver: *Notes for Mr Joyce Relevant to the Falomo Site*. Kingsway Stores of Nigeria Property Files– Falomo, UAC/2/10/B2/4/2/4, UA.
67. Ibid.
68. *Ikeja Store Expansion Plan Phase II Report*, 8th March 1973, Kingsway Stores of Nigeria Ltd: Property Files Ikeja, UAC/2/10/B2/4/2/6, UA.
69. See Kingsway Stores of Nigeria Ltd: Property Files, Ilorin, UAC/2/10/B2/4/2/7, UA.
70. K. Weaver: *Notes for Mr Joyce Relevant to the Falomo Site*. Kingsway Stores of Nigeria Property Files– Falomo, UAC/2/10/B2/4/2/4, and Improvements to Kingsway Store Branch at Cape Coast, 4th January, 1974, Kingsway Stores of Ghana Ltd, Cape Coast, UAC/2/10/B3/4/2/3, UA.
71. *Letter to Ken Weaver from Kingsway Stores of Ghana*, 14th April 1969, Kingsway Stores of Ghana Burma Camp, UAC/2/10/B3/4/2/2, UA – notably this concerned the Kingsway management, 'this in itself has its dangers and this is the prime factor in my mind at the moment...

government's tend to come and governments tend to go, and there is nothing to stop future governments taking steps to cut back on military expenditure ... thus reducing the potential number of customers'.

72. *Improvement of Kingsway Stores Benin*, undated memorandum, Kingsway Stores of Nigeria Property Files – Benin City, UAC/2/10/B2/4/2/2, UA.
73. *Project – Proposed Supermarket at BP Filling Station*, 13th May 1969, Kingsway Stores of Ghana Kotobabi, UAC/2/10/B3/4/2/5, UA.
74. *Letter from Thompson to JP Van Bruggen*, 11th July 1969, Kingsway Stores of Ghana Kotobabi, UAC/2/10/B3/4/2/5, UA.
75. *Letter from Weaver to Thompson*, 20th August 1969, Kingsway Stores of Ghana Kotobabi, UAC/2/10/B3/4/2/5, UA.
76. *Notes from B. J. Dale on a visit to Kingsway Stores Nigeria May/June 1967*, UAC/1/3/4/7/5 Chairman's Notes and Correspondence Regarding Kingsway Stores, UA.
77. The General Manager of Kingsway Ghana wrote to the Accra Chief Estate's Officer concerning proposals to construct a single storey shop 'on the same pattern as our Cape Coast store [...] one of the top class supermarkets comparable to any departmental store in any part of the world. *Letter from David Aninakwah to the Managing Director of the Ghana State Housing Corporation and the Chief Estates Officer*, Accra, 19th March 1975, UAC/2/10/B3/4/2/4, UA.
78. Martin Thomkinson and Michael Galliard, *Nothing to Declare: Political Corruptions of John Poulson* (London: Calder, 1980). This journalist account remains the most authoritative telling of the Poulson scandal.
79. An excerpt of a published account of the Benin Master Plan with indicative plans and images is held in Kingsway Stores of Nigeria Property Files – Benin City, UAC/2/10/B2/4/2/2, UA.
80. *Notes from B. J. Dale on a visit to Kingsway Stores Nigeria May/June 1967*, UAC/1/3/4/7/5 Chairman's Notes and Correspondence Regarding Kingsway Stores, UA.
81. *Letter from Weaver to Nork* 23rd July 1970, Kingsway Stores of Nigeria Property Files - Benin City, UAC/2/10/B2/4/2/2, UA.
82. Ibid.
83. *Board Memorandum* – New Benin Store, 27th February 1973, Kingsway Stores of Nigeria Property Files – Benin City, UAC/2/10/B2/4/2/2, UA.
84. *Letter from Salu to Buckle*, 14th May 1975, Kingsway Stores of Nigeria Property Files – Benin City, UAC/2/10/B2/4/2/2, and Anon., 'Col. Apollo opens the new Benin store', Kayline, 4, no. 2 (September 1975), UA.
85. *Letter from Nork to Louden*, 22nd February 1971, Kingsway Stores of Nigeria Property Files – Benin City, UAC/2/10/B2/4/2/2, UA. This noted, with evident frustration, that 'Chief Osagie had been talking to Chief Edewor, who is our landlord in Warri...'
86. *Letter from Northcott to Dale*, Kingsway Stores of Nigeria Property Files – Warri, UAC/2/10/B2/4/2/11, UA. Northcote noted: 'I visited Warri last week... progress on the site is no further advanced... the lines of the building walls have been dug and are now full of water. The Pedrochi agent is sitting around kicking his heels... both Pedrochi and Edewor accuse each other openly of being slow payers ... I wondered why they continued to do business. Edewor says better the devil you know, but I learnt from the Esso that he is a director of the local Pedrochi set up in Warri...'
87. This was for example, the logic governing the development of a new store in Port Harcourt in the 1970s, to replace one damaged by aerial bombardment during the Biafran war, enacted through an agreement with Barclays Bank to lease a floor of supermarket space in a large mixed-use development that also provided anew banking hall and offices for Barclays. The capital for the development came from Barclays, but state Indigenisation legalisation meant that the development itself had to be undertaken by a Nigerian developer, in this case the former

Attorney General Dr Nabo Graham-Douglas. See Kingsway Stores of Nigeria Property Files – Port Harcourt, UAC/2/10/B2/4/2/9, UA. Brothers Ghana 12 December 1973. The Ghanaian government took 49 per cent share in the soap works.

88. *Letter from Weaver to Nork*, 3rd Dec 1974, Kingsway Stores of Nigeria Property Files – Port Harcourt, UAC/2/10/B2/4/2/9, UA. For details on the Lever Factory, see UAC/1/11/14/5/1 'History of the activities of Unilever in Ghana', represented there by UAC International Ltd and Lever Brothers Ghana 12 December 1973. The Ghanaian government took 49 per cent share in the soap works.

89. *Mr Dale's Notes on Coast Visit*, 19th December 1967, Chairman's Notes and Correspondence Re Kingsway UAC/1/3/4/7/5, UA.

90. *Letter from Marriott to Thomas*, 5th April 1968, Kingsway Stores of Ghana Ltd: Property Files – Kumasi UAC/2/10/B3/4/2/7, UA.

91. *Letter from Richards to Marriott*, 15th June 1973, Kingsway Stores of Ghana Ltd: Property Files – Kumasi UAC/2/10/B3/4/2/7, UA.

92. *Letter from Dale to Thomas*, 1st of April 1968, Kingsway Stores of Ghana Ltd: Property Files – Kumasi UAC/2/10/B3/4/2/7, UA. Calculations of depreciation were central to assessing whether redevelopment was profitable or not. In the case of the Kumasi store, where the store's age meant that depreciation had effectively levelled out, there was little argument for redevelopment. In contrast, new buildings faced heavy depreciation charges and this could make them less attractive from an accounting perspective; this is also captured in a letter from Dale to Chris Richards, 16th April 1968, in the same file.

93. Unsigned extract from a letter dated 27th April 1970, Kingsway Stores of Ghana Ltd: Property Files – Kumasi UAC/2/10/B3/4/2/7, UA.

94. *Mr Dale's Notes on Coast Visit*, 19th December 1967, Chairman's Notes and Correspondence Re Kingsway UAC/1/3/4/7/5, UA. Although the full quotation suggests Dale does not think this likely.

95. *Letter Richards to Dale*, 13th May 1970, Kingsway Stores of Ghana Ltd: Property Files – Kumasi UAC/2/10/B3/4/2/7, UA. In 1970 Kingsway had instructed Taylor Woodrow to draw up plans for a single-storey replacement store, to be built behind the existing development, these plans were presented to the Ashantene but the plans seem to have stalled. In a meeting with the Chairman of the Ashanti Regional Council Kingsway were told 'the Asantehene has sighted the new plans for a Kingsway store and was very pleased that we were going ahead', 14th January 1970

96. *Letter from Aninakwah to Weaver*, 19th September 1973, Kingsway Stores of Ghana Ltd: Property Files – Kumasi UAC/2/10/B3/4/2/7, UA

97. *J. K. Amoah Memorandum: State of Buildings in Kumasi*, 14th September 1972, Kingsway Stores of Ghana Ltd: Property Files - Kumasi UAC/2/10/B3/4/2/7, UA.

98. Ibid. All land in the Kumasi region was technically in the freehold of the Asantehene, and all land bought by foreign traders as freehold had been converted to leasehold in 1935, when the primacy of the Asantehene had been recognised by the British colonial regime. Ashanti Palace Archives MAG/21/6/1/3/26/46 Ashanti Lands Tenure. A mere two days later, a largely verbatim account of this meeting was published in *The Daily Graphic*, suggesting that the regional authorities in Kumasi were not above weaponizing press interest in expatriate businesses in general, and Kingsway in particular, to try and sway the company into action. Anon, 'Ultimatum to c ompanies' Daily Graphic 19th April, 1974.

99. *Letter from Guthrie*, the Gm of Kingsway Stores of Ghana, to the Chairman of UAC of Ghana 14th May 1973, Kingsway Stores of Ghana Ltd: Property Files – Kumasi UAC/2/10/B3/4/2/7, UA

100. *Letter from Weaver to Guthrie*, 22nd October 1973, Kingsway Stores of Ghana Ltd: Property Files – Kumasi UAC/2/10/B3/4/2/7, UA.

101. *Letter from Guthrie to Weaver*, 11th December 1973, Kingsway Stores of Ghana Ltd: Property Files – Kumasi UAC/2/10/B3/4/2/7, UA.

102. *Letter from Anikawah to Weaver*, 17th August 1974, Kingsway Stores of Ghana Ltd: Property Files – Kumasi UAC/2/10/B3/4/2/7, UA.

103. *Letter from T. G. Davies Coast Visit Notes June 1969*, Kingsway Stores of Ghana Ltd: Property Files – Kumasi UAC/2/10/B3/4/2/7, UA.

That the UAC's legal team concluded that there was little possibility of the Ashantehene legally cancelling the Kingsway lease must have stiffened Kingsway's resolve against redeveloping the Kumasi store.

104. Notes from B. J. Dale on a visit to Kingsway Stores Nigeria May/June 1967, UAC/1/3/4/7/5 Chairman's Notes and Correspondence Regarding Kingsway Stores, UA.
105. Letter from Thomas to Davies 19th August 1964, Chairman's Notes and Correspondence Regarding Kingsway Stores, UAC/1/3/4/7/5 UA.
106. Minutes of the UAC Board 8th January 1962, UAC Board Meeting Minutes relating to Kingsway 1961–1970 UAC/1/1/2/1/3/11, UA.
107. Memo from Thomas to Davies 26th August 1964 Chairman's Correspondence and Notes Regarding Kingsway Stores, UAC/1/3/4/7/5, UA.
108. *Letter from Thomas to Davies* 19th August 1964, Chairman's Correspondence and Notes Regarding Kingsway Stores, UAC/1/3/4/7/5, UA.
109. The assassination of the Northern Region premier in 1966 as part of the escalating regional and ethnic violence in the run up to the Biafran War likely knocked a new Kingsway Store off the Northern Region Government's agenda for some time. The store was eventually redeveloped, as a supermarket, in the early 1980s, one of the last new Kingsway Stores built before the chain was sold in the 1990s.
110. Letter from the General Managers office Kingsway Nigeria, to Ken Weaver 30th July 1970, Kingsway Ghana Cape Coast: Improvements to Kingsway Stores Branch at Cape Coast, Ghana, UAC/2/10/B3/4/2/3, UA. Kingsway Ghana later reversed this position and used its capital reserves to update existing stores, and in some cases, to build small new ones. This policy change was driven in no small part by the company's substantial reserves of cedis, a non-convertible currency, that couldn't easily be removed from Ghana.
111. *Letter to Ken Weaver from Kingsway Stores of Ghana*, 14th April 1969, Kingsway Stores of Ghana Burma Camp, UAC/2/10/B3/4/2/2, UA.
112. Stephanie Decker, 'Corporate legitimacy', 63 and 76.
113. The effects of Nigerianisation of legislation is discussed extensively in Kingsway Stores of Nigeria Property Files – Benin City, UAC/2/10/B2/4/2/2, UA. That the UAC's financial practices were increasingly scrutinised is captured in a 'polite lecture' a director of Taylor Woodrow Nigeria received from the Chief Secretary to the Nigerian Treasury, in which the latter complained that Taylor Woodrow was repatriating profits whilst running its Nigerian bank accounts in overdraft. See *Memo from Thomas to Richards*, 23rd September 1964, Chairman's Correspondence re Taylor Woodrow, Chairman's Box 61, UAC/1/3/4/17/3, UA.
114. Memo from Omidiola to Cooper, 21st January 1985, UAC/1/12/2/2/1/11 – Regional Management Box 12, Property Development Nigeria. The UAC was expecting to lease the completed flats to a mix of local and expatriate renters: the British High Commission, and the scheme's contractor Boygues, had expressed interest in obtaining leases in the development.
115. *Letter from Makinde to Perrin* 25th July 1985 and Memo from Omidiola to Cooper, 21st January 1985, UAC/1/12/2/2/1/11. Especially significant as exchange controls and dividend limits meant Naria reserves could not easily be moved from Nigeria.
116. Memo from Omidiola to Cooper, 21st January 1985, UAC/1/12/2/2/1/11. He further noted that these were vulnerable to potential compulsory purchase by the Lagos State government.
117. UAC Property Strategy, UAC/2/1/19/4/4/9, UA – the strategy document pertaining to the formation of the property division is undated, but certainly post-dates 1979.
118. UAC Property Strategy, UAC/2/1/19/4/4/9, UA.
119. *Ibid.*
120. The UAC was still involved in property development at Ikoyi into the mid 1980s and at a scale that 'seems to be leading us into uncharted waters'. The shares in these developments were not sold until 1988 after most other assets had been sold or absorbed into the parent company, Unilever. UAC/2/19/4/4/11, UA.

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KSA/19A



UACPhotos Box24 2335, Accra photo by Justus A. C. Holm. Official Photographer to the Gold Coast Government'



UAC/2/10/b1/8/1/10, Kingsway Stores Ltd: Photograph Album - Opening of Kingsway Stores, Accra, 1957



Sir Patrick Fitz-Gerald and Dr. Nkrumah at the bar after the opening.



UAC/2/10/b1/8/1/8. Album of black and white photographs taken at the official opening of Kingsway Stores, Accra by Kwame Nkrumah, President of the Gold Coast, 31 January 1957. Including photographs of the latter making his speech, accompanied by Sir Charles Arden-Clarke and Sir Patrick Fitzgerald, Chairman of UAC of Ghana Ltd. 31 January 1957



After the opening, Sir Patrick and Mr. Midgley enjoy a joke with Mr. Botsio, Dr. Nkrumah, Mr. Gbedemah and Mr. Moxon, the Director of Government Information Services.



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UAC/1/11/9/46, Promotional album entitled 'The Kingsway Organisation', containing photographs of Kingsway department stores and shops in Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Southern Cameroons. n.d. [1957-1961]



UAC-1-11-10-1-10, Colour photographs of Kingsway Accra from 1958



UAC-1-11-10-1-10, Colour photographs of Kingsway Accra from 1958



UAC-1-11-10-1-10, Colour photographs of Kingsway Accra from 1958



UAC-1-11-10-1-10, Colour photographs of Kingsway Accra from 1958



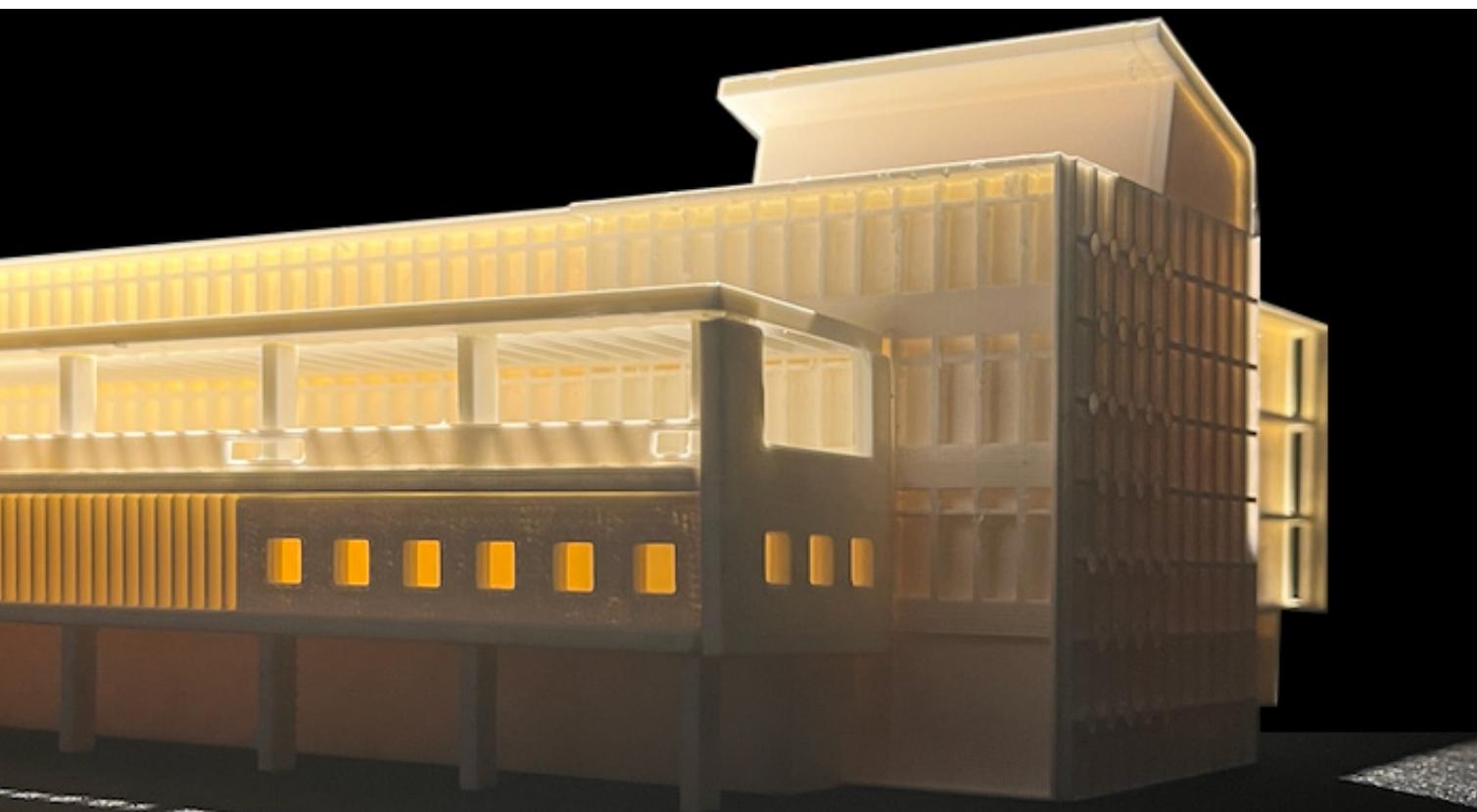
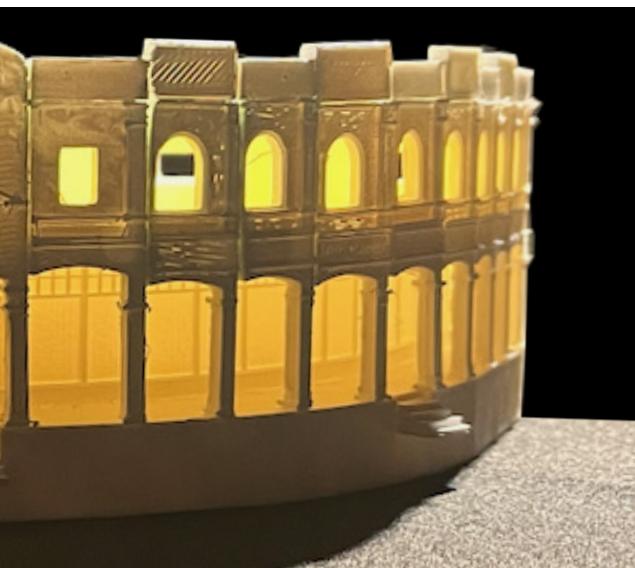
UAC-1-11-10-1-10, Colour photographs of Kingsway Accra from 1958



3D printed model of first Kingsway Accra (formerly Millers), by Jessica Dolan and Harry Turner, 2024. Photograph by Iain Jackson



3D printed model of new Accra Kingsway, by James Kwok, 2024. Photograph by Iain Jackson





## *The Supreme Court*



## *Christiansborg Castle*



### *Roman Catholic Cathedral*



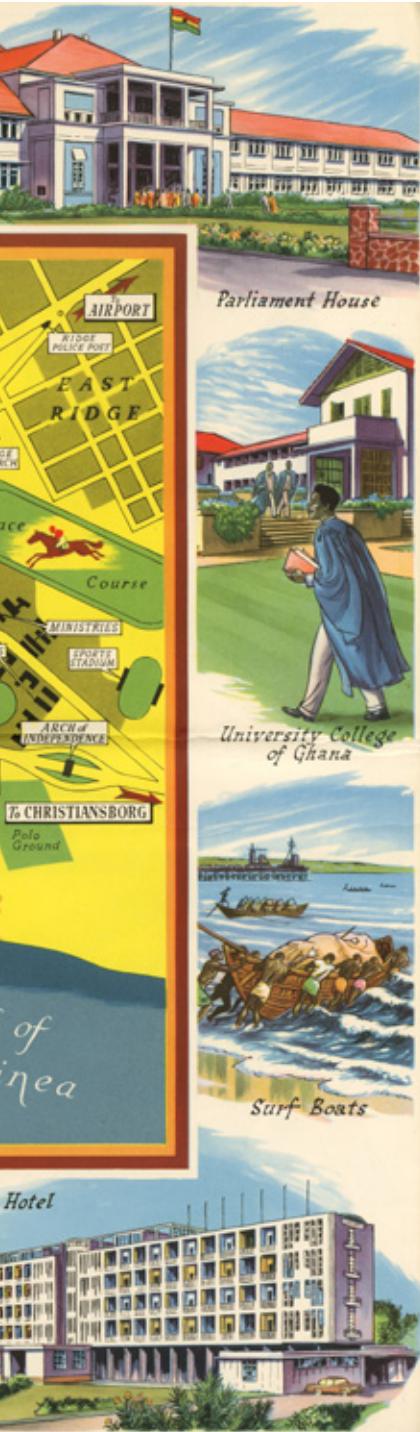
### *Accra Airport*



## *Kingsway*



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CAFETERIA • FASHION & HAIRDRESSING SALONS  
SPACIOUS SUPERMARKET



THERE'S a wonderful new shopping experience awaiting you at the new Kingsway Stores. In greater comfort than you've ever known before, better variety, better service. In the luxurious new premises special attention has been paid to self-service and self-selection; the full range of departments connected by escalators and passenger lifts caters for *all* your needs. Important, too, are the spacious parking facilities – the finest in Town, with petrol, oil and air services. Be sure to pay an early visit to the new Kingsway Stores – you'll vote them *the* shopping centre of attraction !



## SPECIAL FEATURES

- Spacious Supermarket with self-service
- Air conditioned Gold Store with self-service
- Licensed Restaurant & self-service Cafeteria
- Air conditioned Hairdressing Salons for Ladies & Gentlemen
- Post Office
- Facilities for Wedding Receptions, Parties, etc.

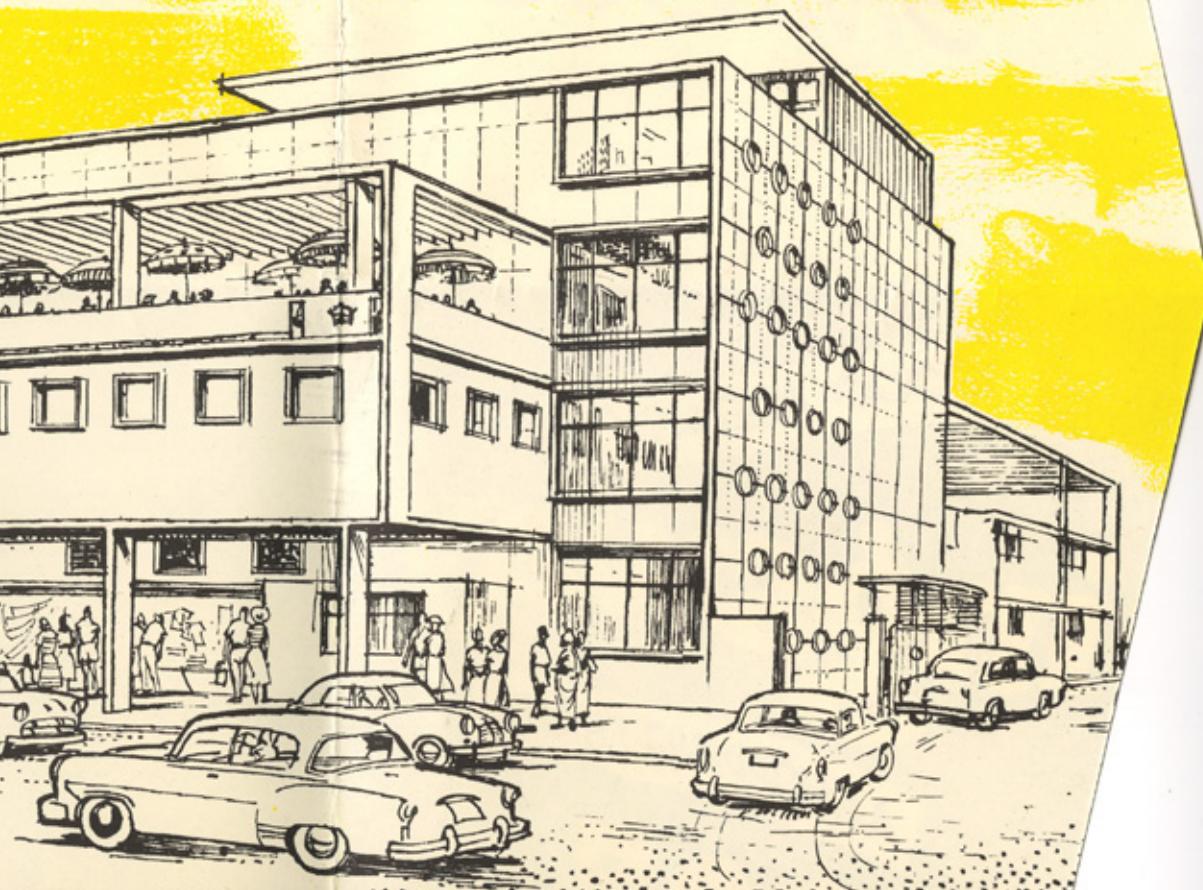
OTHER DEPARTMENTS  
HARDWARE  
ELECTRICAL  
TRAVEL BUREAU

ingsway Stores . . .

e, better value.

e

IS



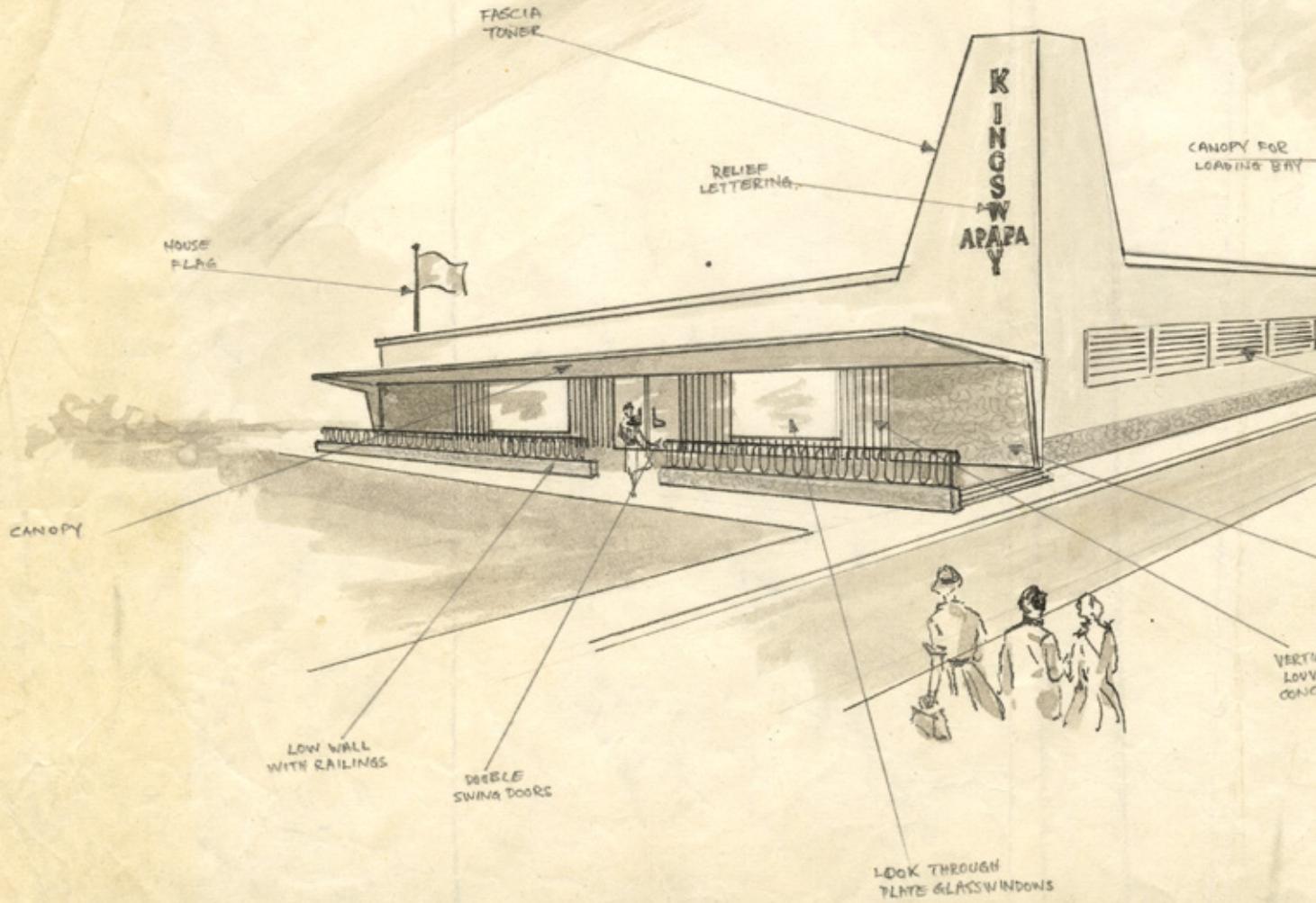
**RTMENTS** LADIES', MEN'S & CHILDREN'S WEAR  
RE • PHARMACY & DISPENSARY • BAKERY  
CAL & TECHNICAL • DRINKS & TOBACCO  
REAU • NEWSPAPER & PERIODICAL SERVICE

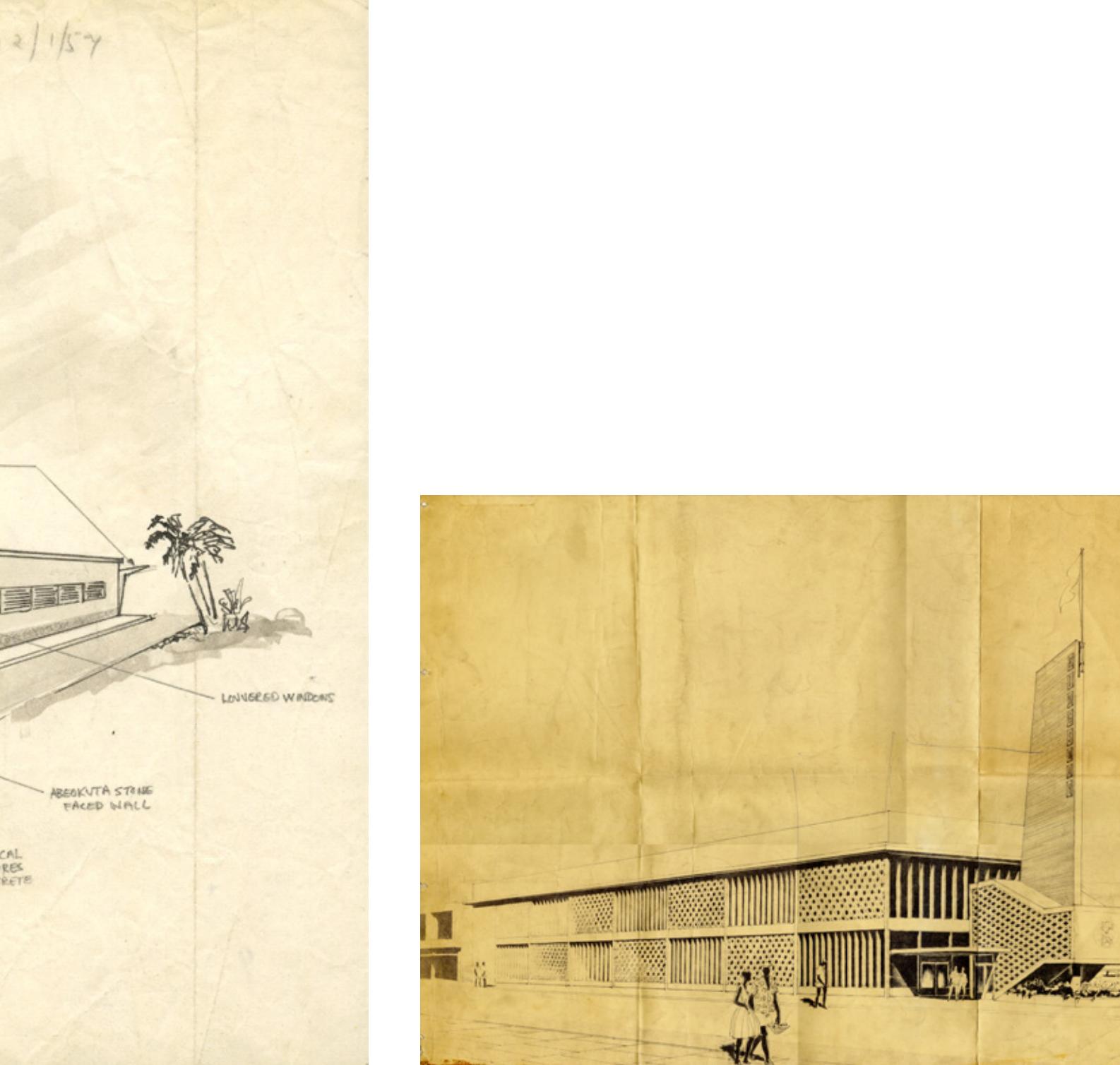
# APAPA



UAC-1-11-10-1-9-01, Apapa Kingsway Store, 1968

FIRST ROUGH VISUAL OF PROPOSED NEW BUILDING  
KINGSWAY STORES LTD CROSS APAPA BRANCH





UAC/2/10/B2/4/4/1/1, Perspective sketch of the proposed new Kingsway Stores, Apapa, 1960

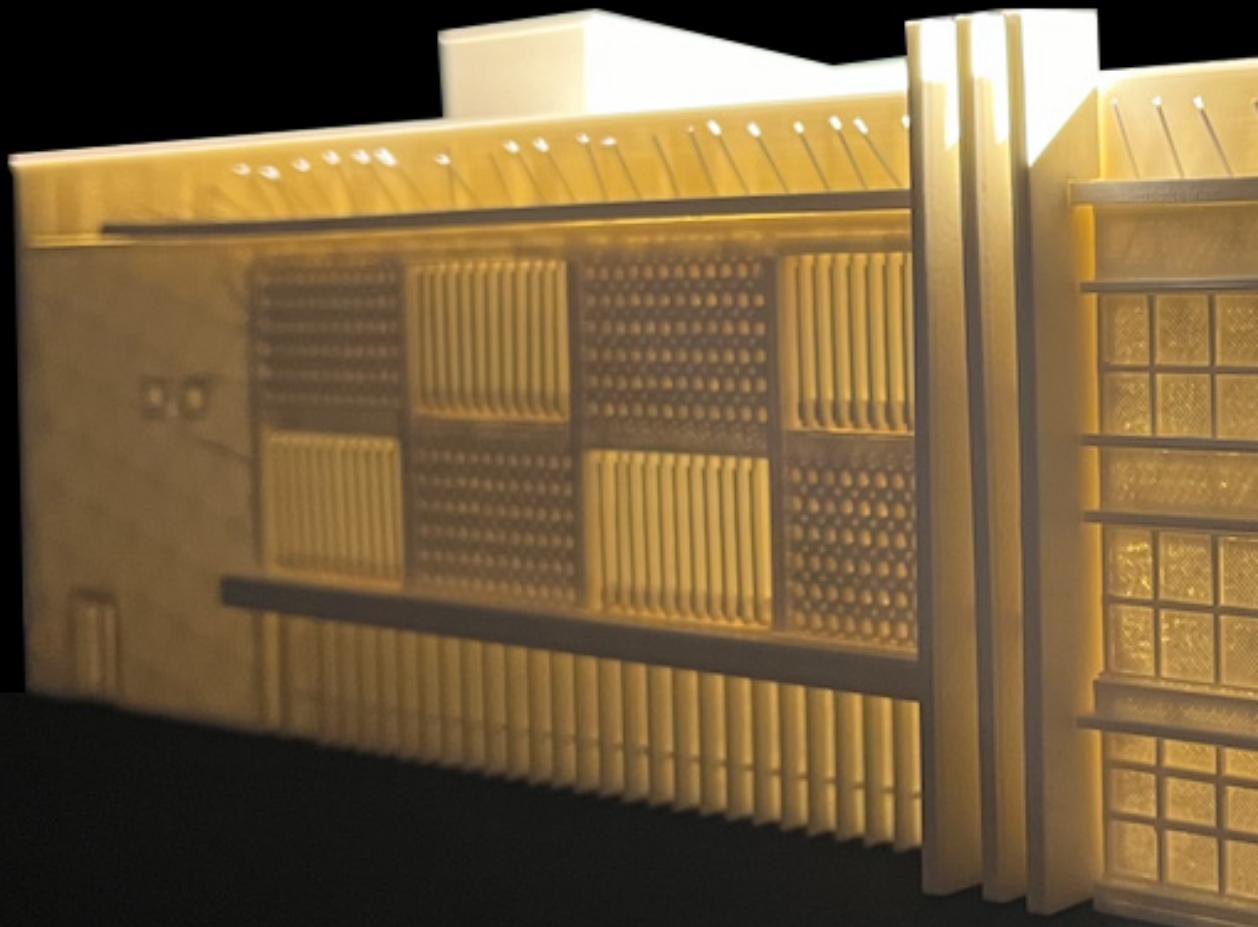
NEW KINGSWAY STORE AT APAPA

OCTOBER 1961

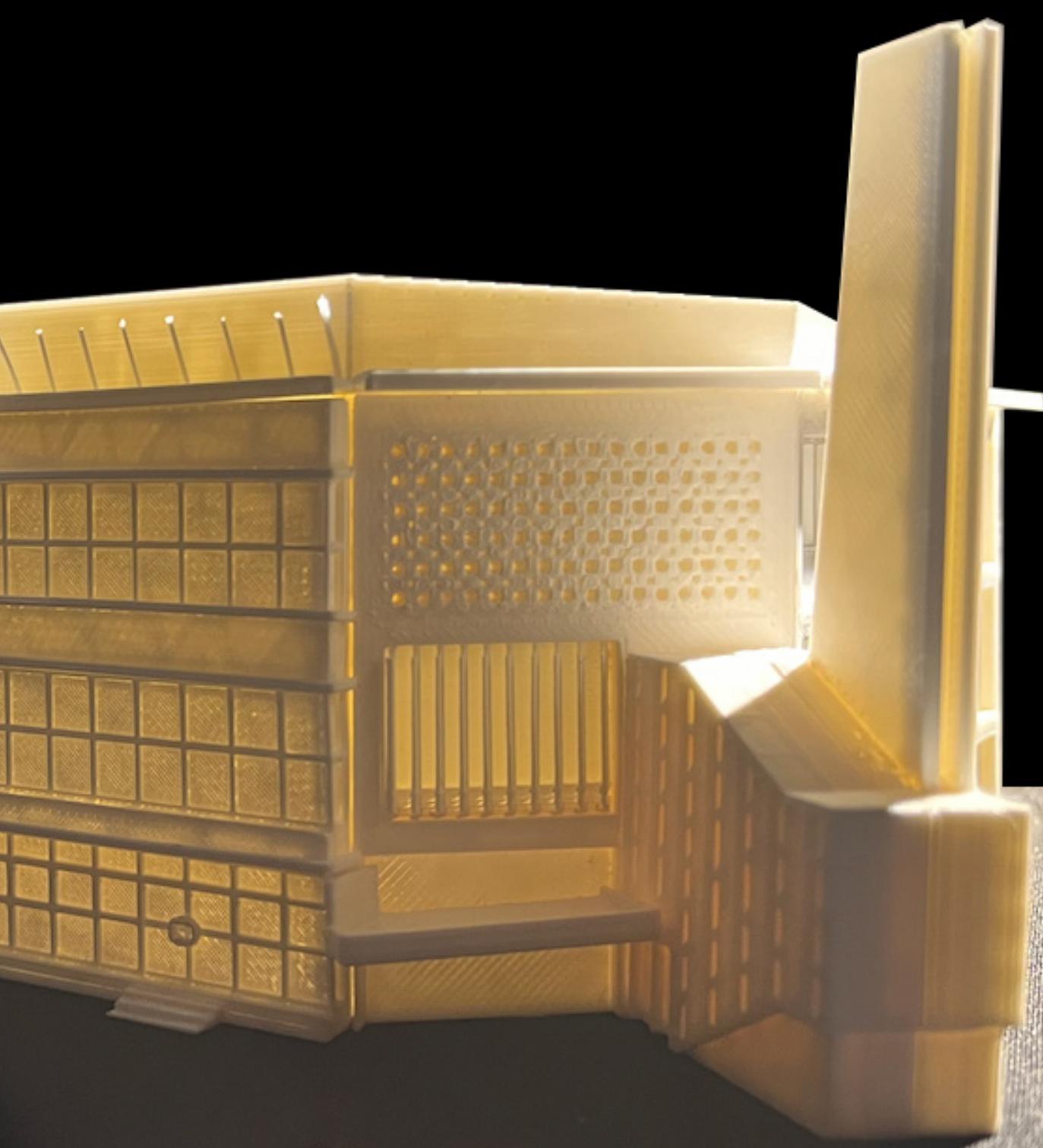




UAC/2/10/b1/8/1/15, Photographs of the new Kingsway Store at Apapa October 1961



3D printed model of Kingsway Apapa, Mohadesh Kani, 2024. Photograph by Iain Jackson



# BANJUL



UAC-1-11-10-1-11-002, Banjul (formerly Bathurst) Kingsway, 1968



UAC-1-11-10-1-11-002, Banjul (formerly Bathurst) Kingsway, 1968



UAC-1-11-10-1-11-002, Banjul (formerly Bathurst) Kingsway, 1968



UAC-1-11-10-1-11-002, Banjul (formerly Bathurst) Kingsway, 1968



UAC-1-11-10-1-11-002, Banjul (formerly Bathurst) Kingsway, 1968

# BENIN

FILE REFERENCE:

NIGERIA

7

DATE: MAR68

INDEX NO:

N141847

DESCRIPTION:  
& LOCATION:

KINGSWAY STORE  
BENIN

CAPTION:

Exterior and

car park  
out of date

Replacement required

COPYRIGHT:

"BY COURTESY OF

THE UNITED AFRICA COMPANY LTD."

PHOTOGRAPH BY TOM SMITH

REPRODUCTION FEE

£1. 1. 0d.

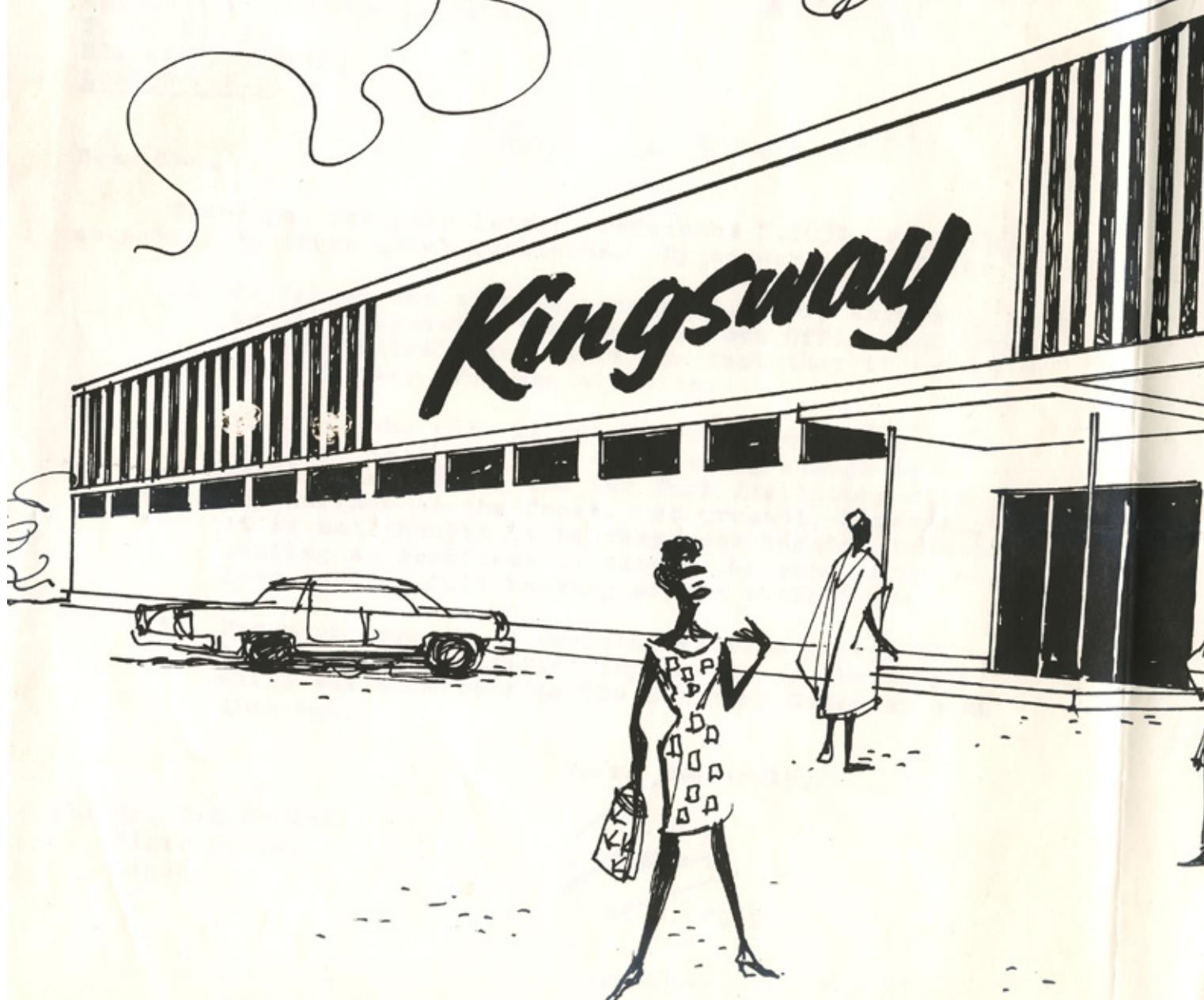


PLEASE RETURN TO:

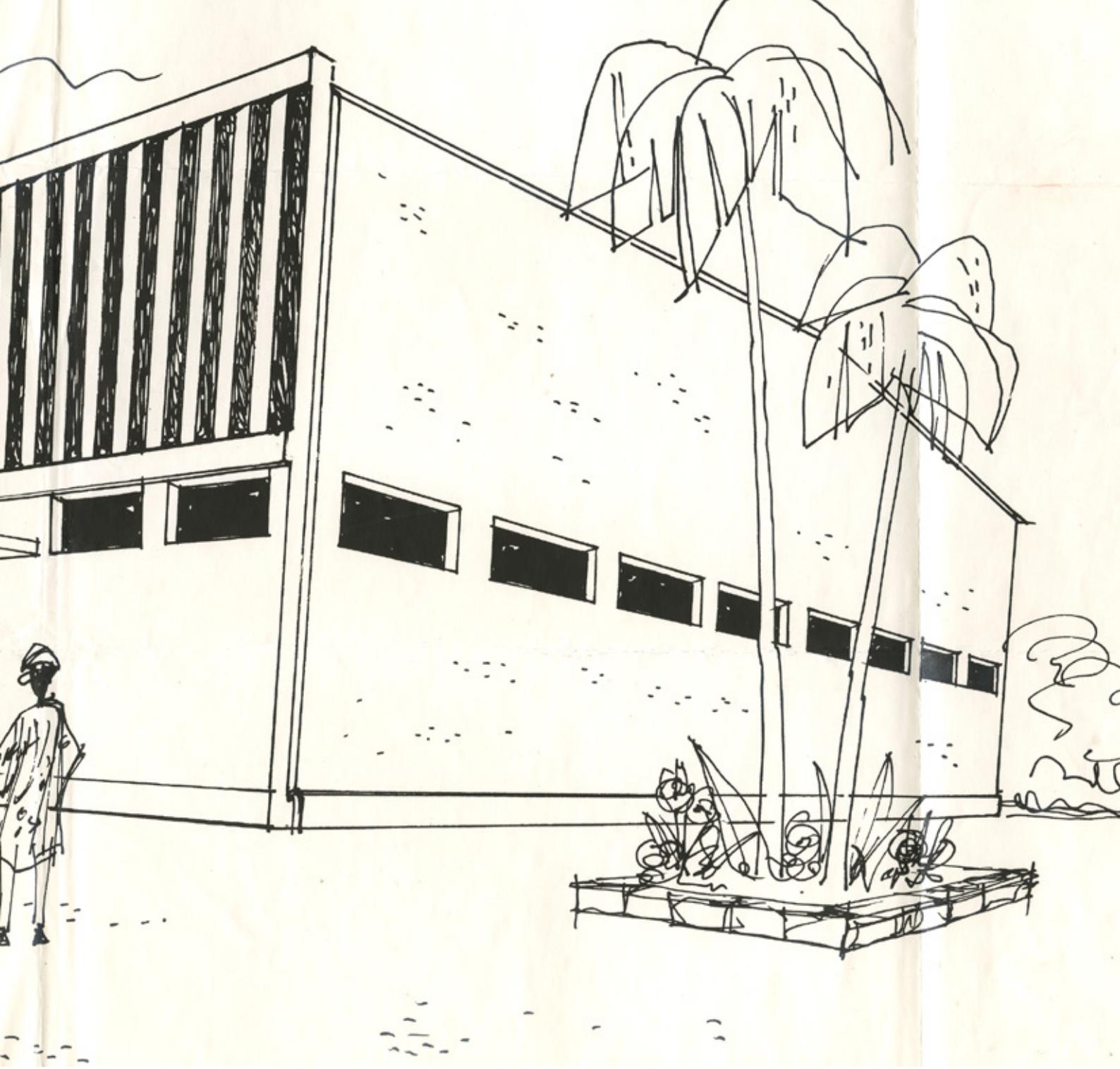
GROUP PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPT.

UNITED AFRICA HOUSE

LONDON, S.E.1.



UAC/2/10/b2/4/2/2, Perspective sketch for proposed Kingsway Benin, 1970



# CALABAR



UAC/1/11/46(22)

UAC/1/11/9/46, Kingsway Calabar, from Promotional album entitled 'The Kingsway Organisation', containing photographs of Kingsway department stores and shops in Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Southern Cameroons. n.d. [1957-1961]

# ENUGU

FILE REFERENCE: NIGERIA

DATE: 24 JAN. 58 INDEX NO: 1358 1211

DESCRIPTION: BUILDINGS  
& LOCATION: ENUGU

CAPTION: "KINGSWAY"

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

COPYRIGHT: "BY COURTESY OF  
THE UNITED AFRICA COMPANY LTD."

Photo by J. BARKER

REPRODUCTION FEE: 10s. 6d.



PLEASE RETURN TO:

U.A.C. INFORMATION DEPT.  
UNILEVER HOUSE, E.C.4.

# FREETOWN



*Freetown Branch*

UAC 1/11/9/12/104

1915

UAC/1/11/9/12/104 Pickering and Berthold, Freetown, 1915. Trading store and site of the future Kingsway Store



# Have Something New

## FOR EASTER

There's dress sense in every line of Kingsway's day and evening frocks. For the fuller figure there are clever creations in gay prints, silks and crepes—and some "exclusives" for those special occasions.



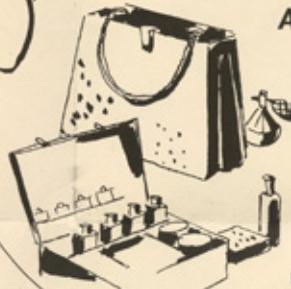
*Kingsway offer you the widest choice in fashions*

Kingsway's fashion buyers have been busy in London.

Result—the fascinating collection of new season's styles awaiting your approval on your very next visit to Kingsway Ladies' Department.



### Don't forget the Accessories...



Attention to the details of shoes, handbag and gloves, creates the charm and attractiveness of your ensemble. Kingsway have a big choice for you.



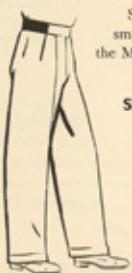
### Cosmetics, too!

Aids to beauty are indispensable, as every woman knows. Complete beauty boxes or individual items by your favourite makers are stocked by Kingsway.



### CLOTHES FOR MEN

Suits, shirts, shoes, socks... the smartest styles in town come from the Men's Department at Kingsway.



#### SPORTS TROUSERS

Kingsway specialise in slacks for men tailored in the modern manner. They have your size: your shade. Ask to see the latest arrivals.

★ For men about town (or up-country) Kingsway have a wide selection of ready-made slacks to give the well-dressed look and reasonably priced.

*Kingsway Men's Department keeps you abreast of fashion*

**Kingsway**  
STORES

HOWE STREET, FREETOWN. P.O. BOX 422. TELEPHONE 708, 709

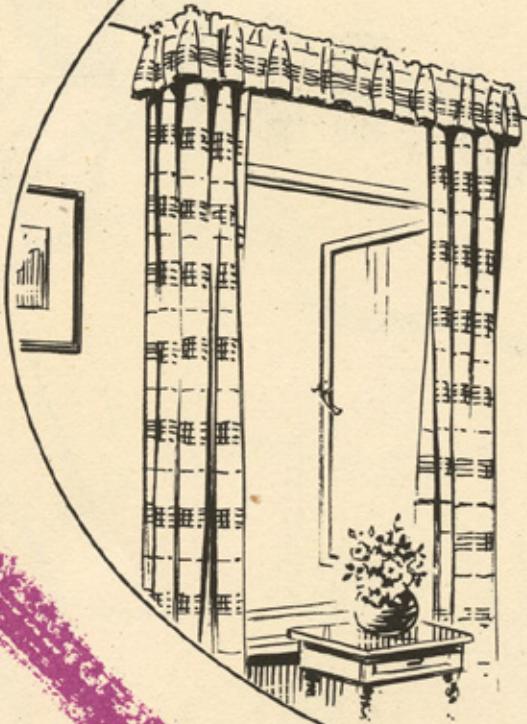
Always  
a good  
deal  
for you



at  
*Kingsway*  
STORES

HOWE STREET • FREETOWN

*Why not new curtains  
for the house?*



Easter is the time to brighten up the house. New curtains. They need not be sombre. They can be gay. Choose them wisely from the range of patterned fabrics in the Soft Furnishings Department at Kingsway.

Don't fail to see the displays of carpets, cutlery, blankets, bed linen, mattresses and other house furnishings.

**Kingsway HAVE A BIG SELECTION OF  
SOFT FURNISHINGS · BEDDING · ELECTRICS · ETC**

tains  
house?

en up the house with new  
e expensive, but  
ne materials  
actical modern  
ngs





UAC/1/11/9/44, Bus advertisements in Freetown from Album of photographs of the departments and displays of goods in Kingsway Stores Ltd in Lagos, Nigeria, and in Freetown, Sierra Leone. 1952  
- October 1957

'ITS QUICKER  
**SELF SERVICE**  
*Kingsway*<sup>at</sup>

F-4385

SHOP AT  
*Kingsway*  
IT PAYS

72





UAC/1/11/9/44 Shopping at Kingsway Freetown. Album of photographs of the departments and displays of goods in Kingsway Stores Ltd in Lagos, Nigeria, and in Freetown, Sierra Leone. 1952 - October 1957



UAC-1-11-10-1-12, Kingsway Freetown, 1968



UAC-1-11-10-1-12, Kingsway Freetown, 1968



UAC-1-11-10-1-12, Kingsway Freetown, 1968



UAC-1-11-10-1-12, Kingsway Freetown, 1968



UAC-1-11-10-1-12, Kingsway Freetown, 1968



UAC-1-11-10-1-12, Kingsway Freetown, 1968



UAC-1-11-10-1-12, Kingsway Freetown, 1968



UAC-1-11-10-1-12, Kingsway Freetown, 1968



UAC-1-11-10-1-12, Kingsway Freetown, 1968



UAC-1-11-10-1-12, Kingsway Freetown, 1968



JAC/1/11/9/44/99



JAC/1/11/9/44/100

KINGSWAY STORES LTD., FREETOWN  
1953

UAC/1/11/9/44 Shopping at Kingsway Freetown. Album of photographs of the departments and displays of goods in Kingsway Stores Ltd in Lagos, Nigeria, and in Freetown, Sierra Leone. 1952 - October 1957

# Choose presents for everybody at

## FOR CHILDREN

The kiddies will be thrilled to see the grand displays of toys and games at Kingsway. Bring them along.

Come and see the mechanical toys, Meccano sets, train sets, pedal-cars, push-cars, soft toys, teddy bears, dolls and games for young and old — ludo, chess, draughts, cards, dice etc.

He'll approve of a practical present—choose something stylishly masculine for him in the men's wear departments.

For everyday wear he'd like new CUFF LINKS and he'd be really proud of a dress set to wear with that new dinner suit. PYJAMAS and SHIRTS make practical presents too, and of course he'll always bless you for TIES and HANDKERCHIEFS. The sportsman will be pleased to have new sportswear — or a new tennis racquet or that extra iron for golf.

## FOR HER

She will be chosen especially. We suggest

NYLON STOCKINGS. Kingsway have the more personal and handsome pieces. JEWELLERY, WRISTWATCHES, too many styles are now available.

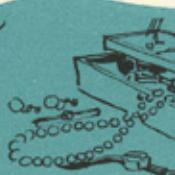
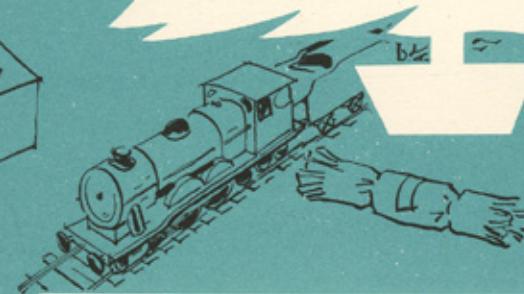
Last of all don't forget the important items of all your Christmas shopping — the Christmas fare — things to drink and things to be enjoyed.

Kingsway stock the fullest range of WINES, LIQUORS, all in excellent condition. They have CHOCOLATES packed in attractive presentation boxes and ready to decorate your table and make the party gay.

There's plenty of CANDIED PEEL and MARMALADE and ready-cooked CHRISTMAS PUDDINGS from the world-famous makers. Lots of good things in the Cold Store Section, too.

## FOR HIM

Shop for Xmas at Kingsway



# Kingsway



*sway—it pays!*



SHOP AT

# Kingsway

HOWE STREET  
FREETOWN

KINGSWAY STORES LTD., P.O. BOX 422. TELEPHONES 708, 709

KSF 56

# IBADAN

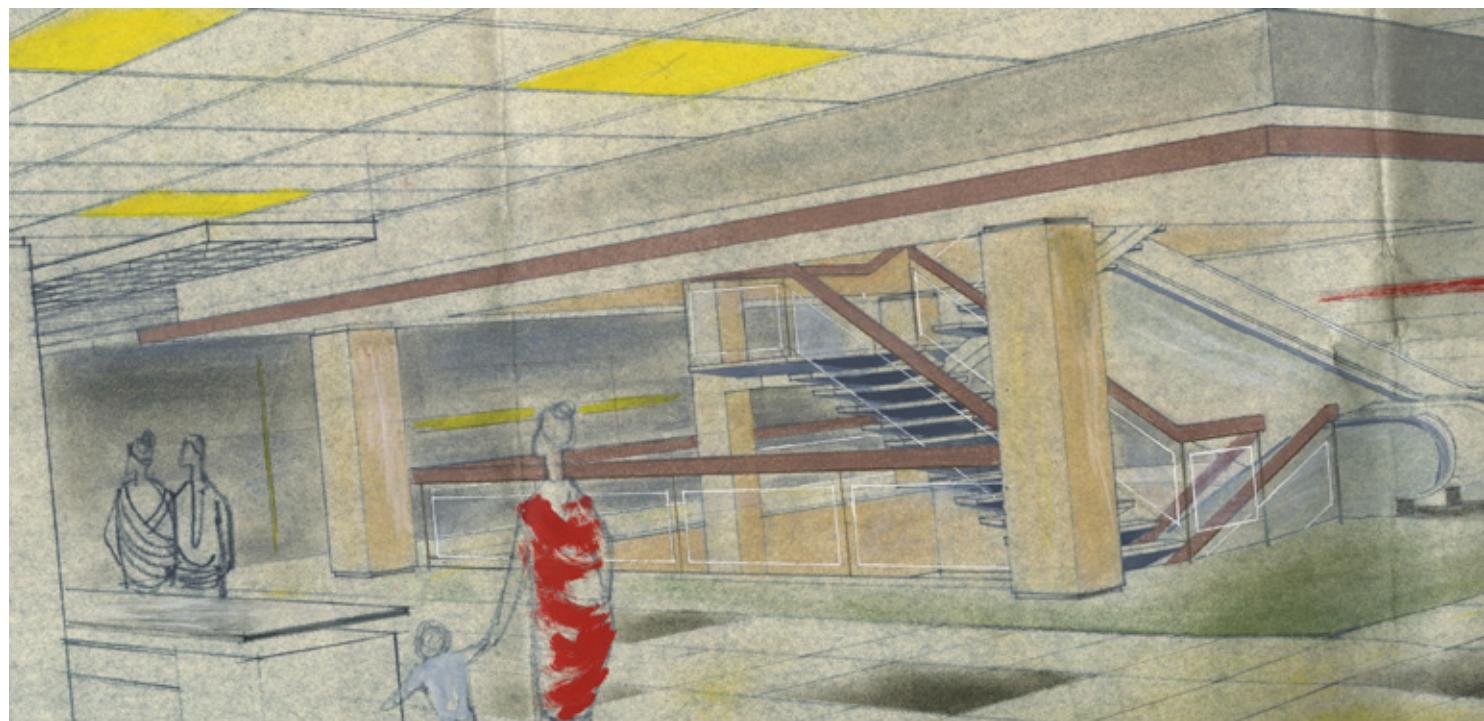


UAC 1/11/46/19

UAC/1/11/46, Old Kingsway in Ibadan, Promotional album entitled 'The Kingsway Organisation', containing photographs of Kingsway department stores and shops in Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Southern Cameroons. n.d. [1957-1961]



UAC/2/10/b2/4/4/3/1, Proposed new store at Ibadan by T P Bennett & Son, Architects, November 1960-11 April 1962



UAC/2/10/b2/4/4/3/1, Interior perspective, Proposed new store at Ibadan by T P Bennett & Son, Architects, November 1960-11 April 1962





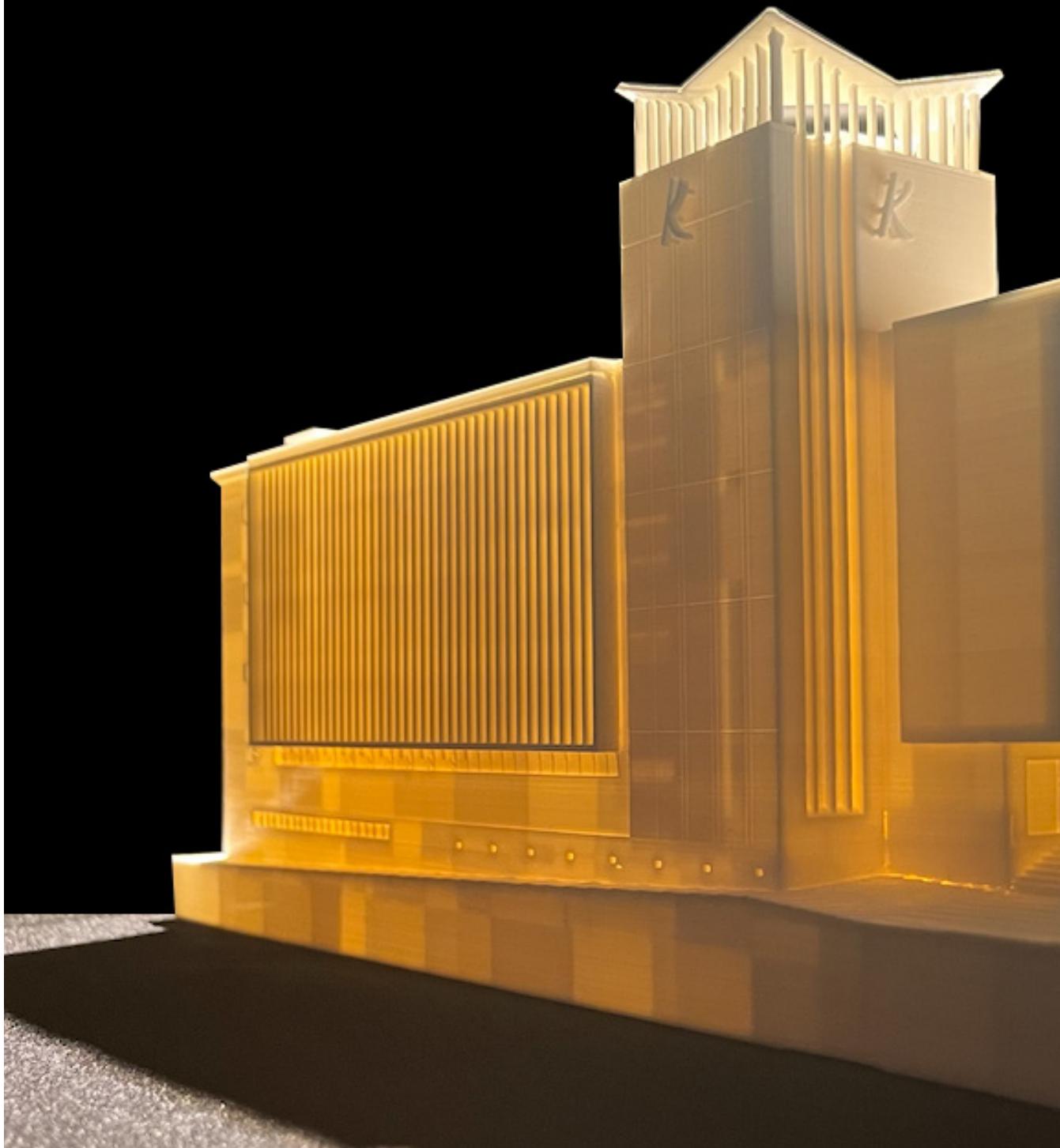
UAC Photographs Acc1998/11\_17\_Kingsway Ibadan, 1968



UAC-1-11-10-1-9-02, Kingsway Ibadan, cosmetics counter, 1968



UAC-1-11-10-1-9-02, Kingsway Ibadan, cosmetics counter, 1968



3D printed model of Kingsway Ibadan, Leo Dong, 2024. Photograph by Iain Jackson



# JOS



UAC/1/11/46/20

UAC/1/11/9/46. Jos store from Promotional album entitled 'The Kingsway Organisation', containing photographs of Kingsway department stores and shops in Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Southern Cameroons. n.d. [1957-1961]

# KADUNA

**NOW OPEN**

NEW  
PREMISES  
FOR

**Kingsway**

*Shops*

**KADUNA**



*Entirely rebuilt in the modern style*

The most  
up-to-date and  
best-stocked  
shop in  
Kaduna

*Come shopping at Kingsway  
...save time  
...save trouble  
...save expense!*



*A branch of THE UNITED AFRICA COMPANY LIMITED*

C197

**Kingsway**



*Opens next week*

# The NEW Kings

**Come and see Kingsway** in their splendid, new premises. Always in the lead, Kingsway is now the most up-to-date and best-stocked shop in Kaduna.

No efforts have been spared in transforming Kingsway into a fine, modern shop. There's a pleasant, smart efficiency about the latest-style counters and show-cases: everything is on view for you to see. You will enjoy obtaining your daily requirements at Kingsway where you will now find the highest standards of shopping comfort and convenience.

*Come shopping at **Kingsway**—it's a pleasure!*

**COLD STORE**



**MEDICINES**



# sway Shop



A BRANCH OF THE UNITED AFRICA COMPANY LIMITED



UAC/2/10/b2/4/2/8, Kingsway Kaduna, 19 September 1980-10 April 1981



UAC/1/11/10/1/9 Kingsway Kaduna, c.1968



UAC/1/11/9/48 Photograph Album: Album of photographs of the official opening of the Kingsway Stores, Kaduna, Nigeria. 8 February 1983. Mr Weaver, Chairman and Managing Director of UAC of Nigeria Ltd and Chief Ernest Shonekan

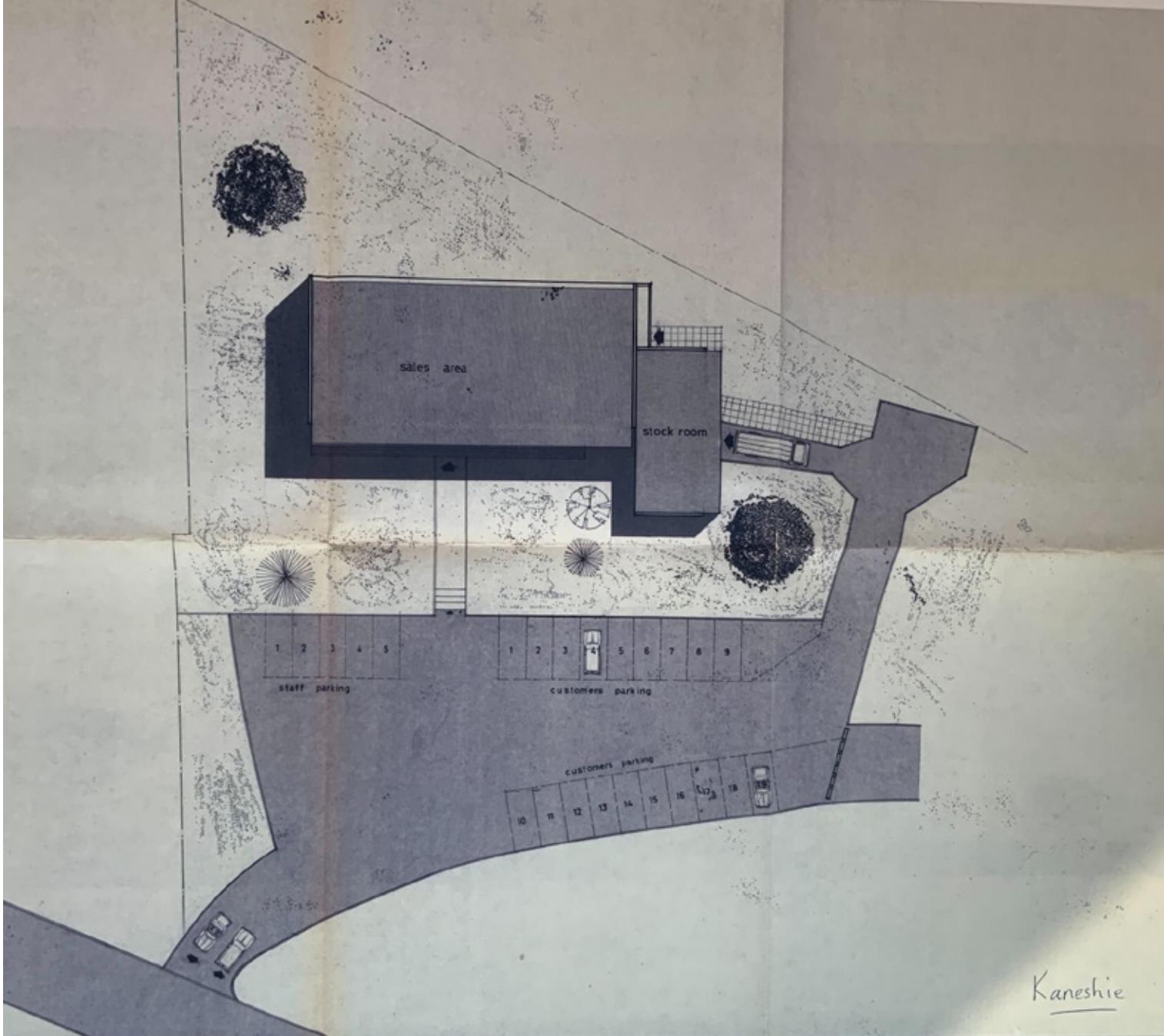


UAC/1/11/9/48 Photograph Album: Album of photographs of the official opening of the Kingsway Stores, Kaduna, Nigeria. 8 February 1983

# KANESHIE



UAC/2/10/b3/4/2/4, Front Elevation Photographs, day and night shots, 1979



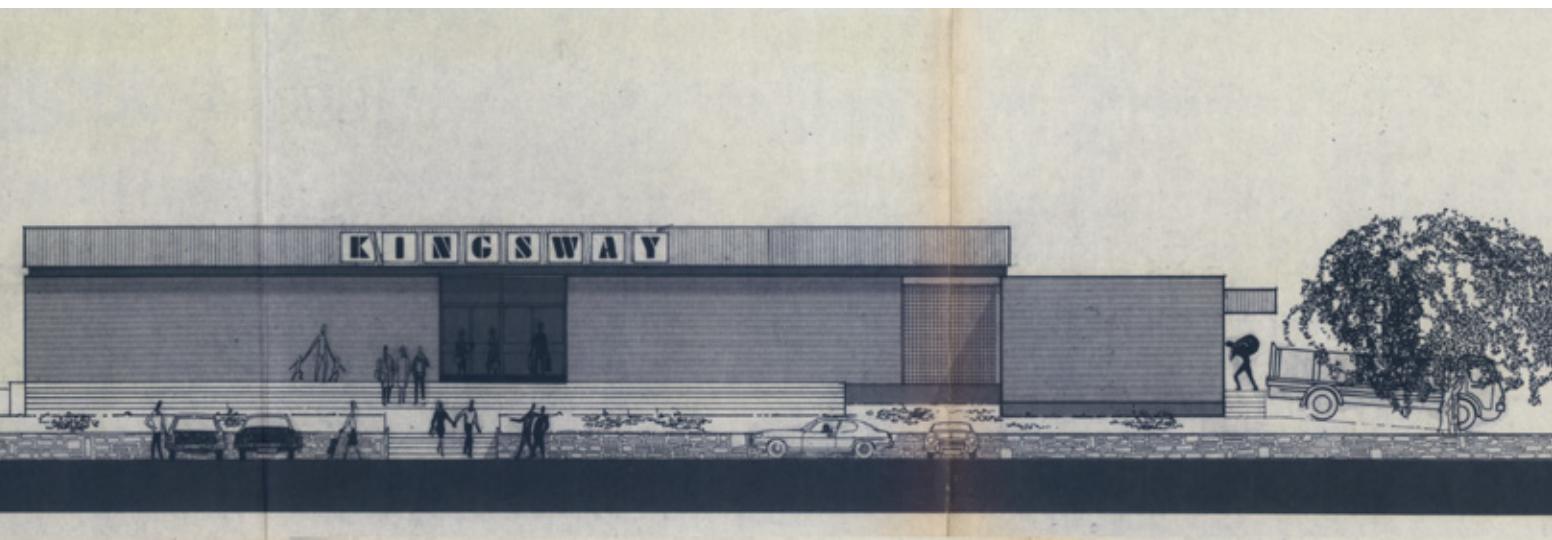
**KINGSWAY STORES GHANA LIMITED**  
**REMODELLING : KANESHIE BRANCH**

Block plan

date December 75  
scale 1:500 ft.  
drawn A. Brown

job 219  
dig 1001

DEWEGER GRUTER & PARTNERS ARCHITECTS & CONSULTING ENGINEERS

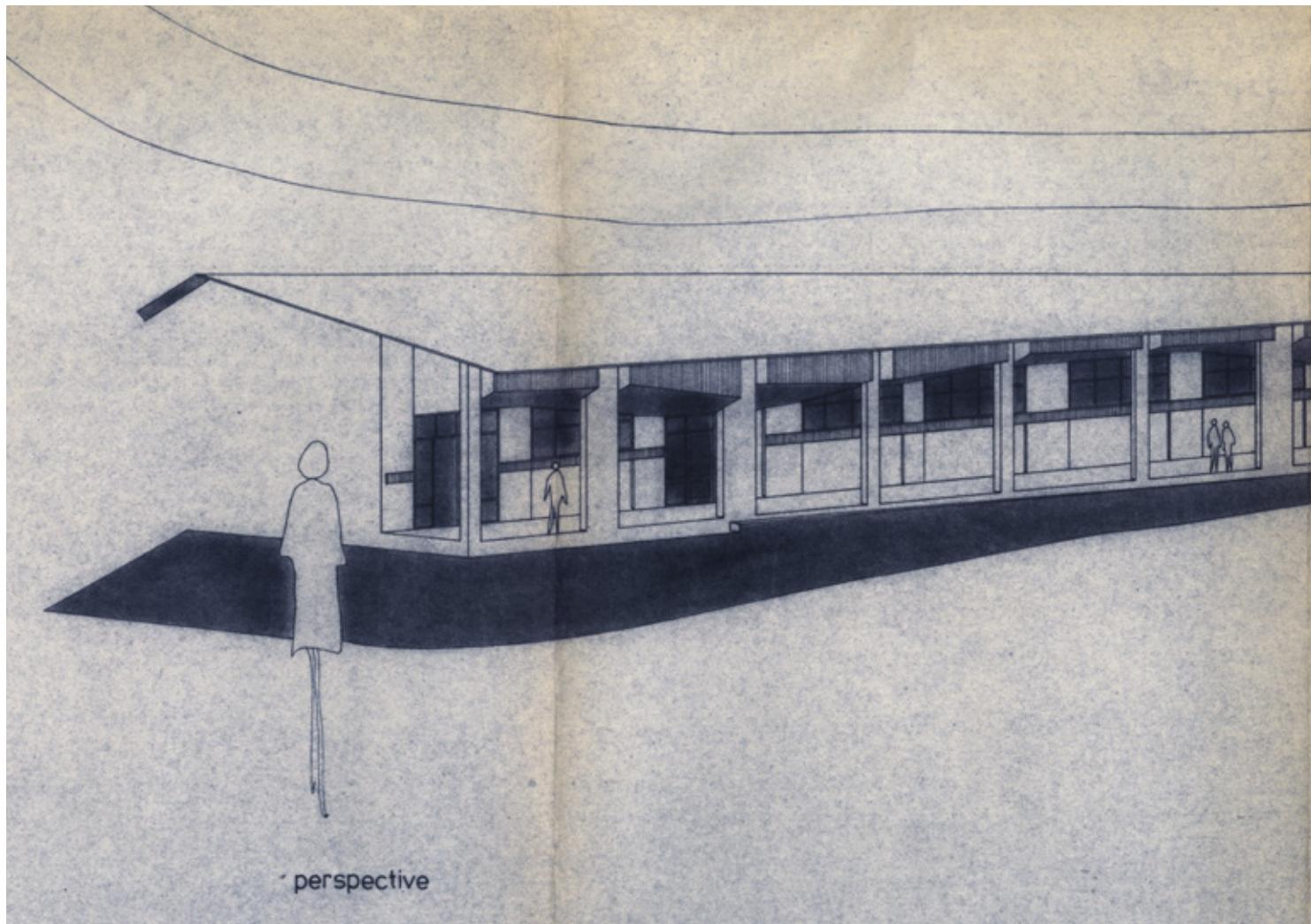


# KANO



UAC-1-11-10-1-9-05, Kingsway Kano, 1968

# KOFORIDUA



UAC/2/10/b3/4/3/2/1, Koforidua mini-supermarket, 1977, proposed front elevation

# KUMASI

Thank you for copying me with your letter of the 12th July, addressed  
to Mr. A.C. Akwasi in Accra.

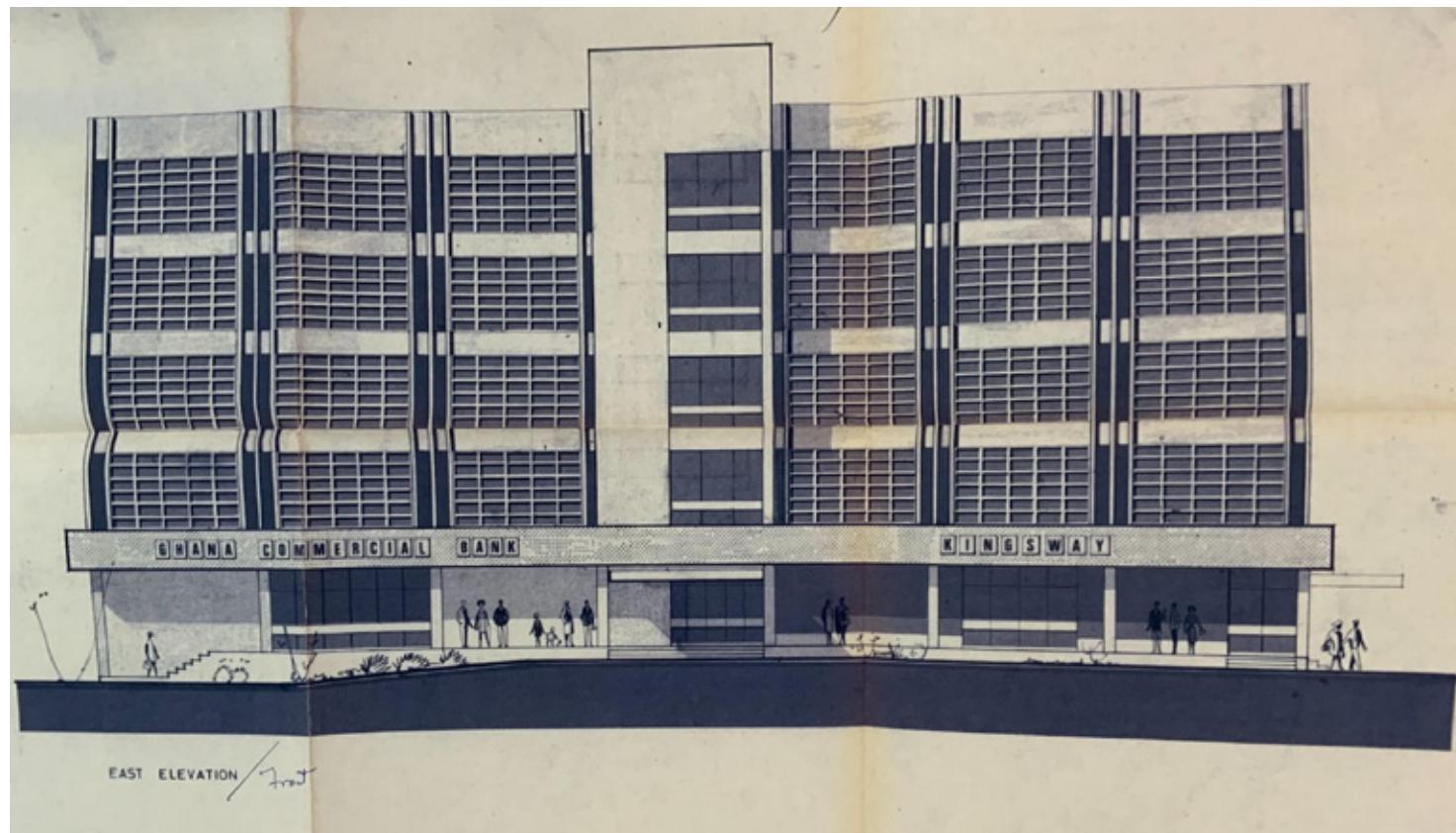
Not knowing very well what you mean by this, I have the impression you  
mean that AIRFRANCE has existed in Kumasi for at least 10 years.

Dear Ninii,

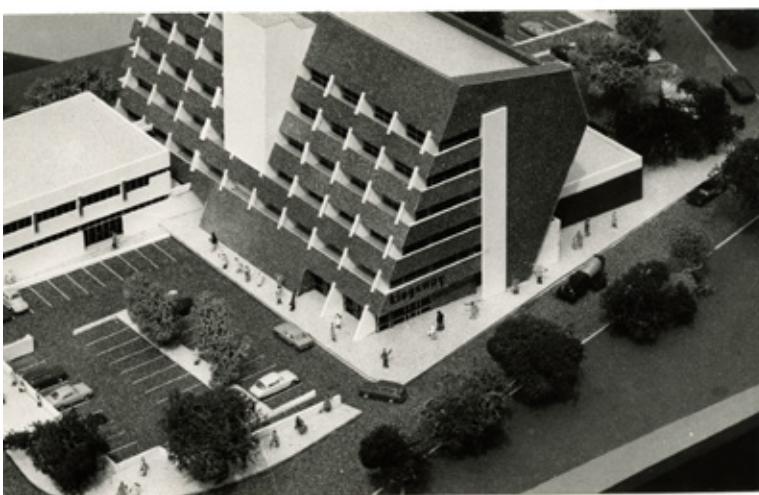




UAC/1/11/9/62/108 F and A Swanzy Limited, Kumasi, photograph from 1909-1920



UAC/2/10/B3/4/2/7 proposed Kingsway Kumasi at Harper Road, 1971



UAC/2/10/B1/8/2/10, Photographs of architect's model of proposed new Kingsway Store at Kumasi, by Deweger Gruter & Partners, Architects and Consulting Engineers. C. late 1970s

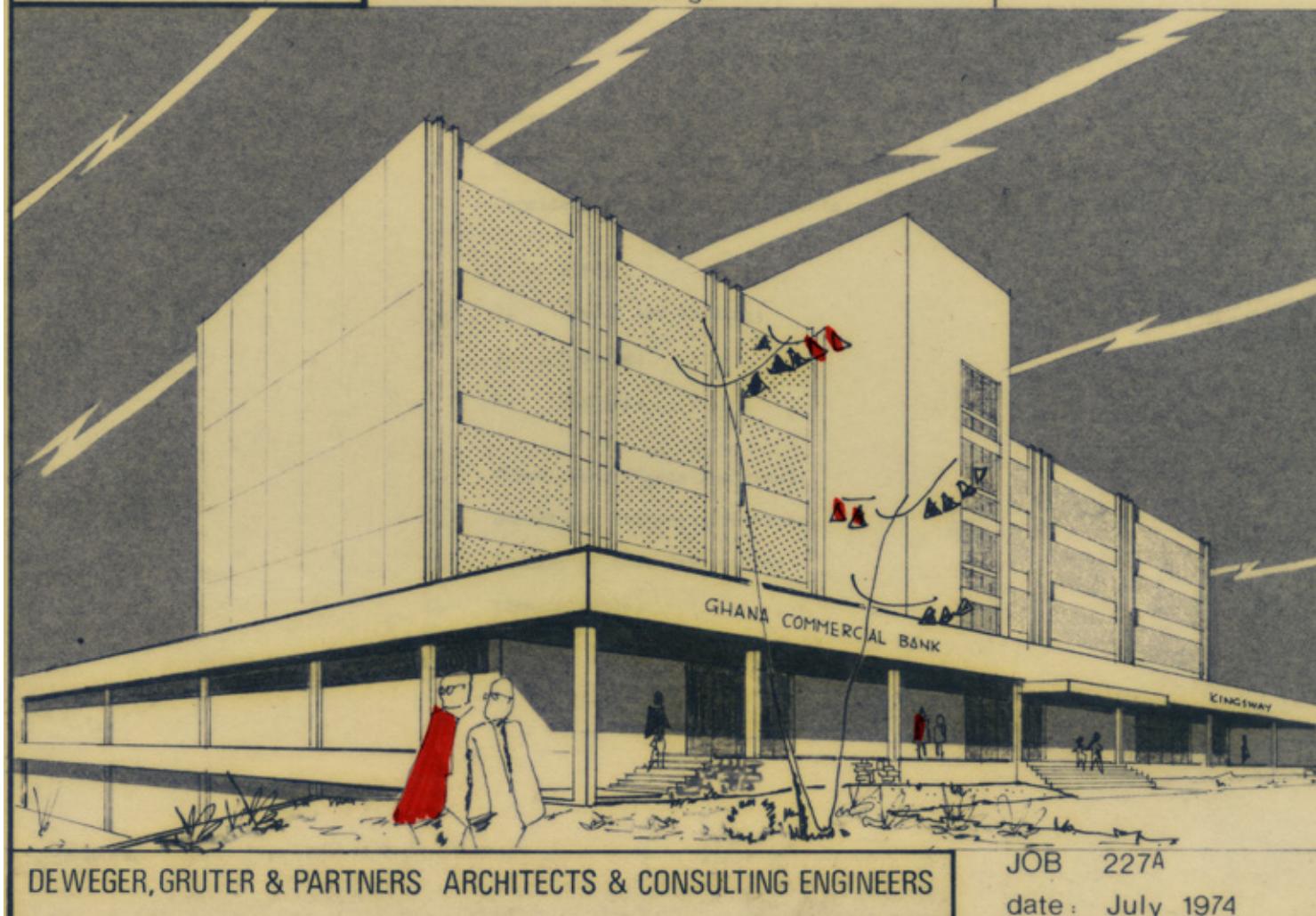
**HARPER-ROAD  
DEVELOPMENT  
KUMASI**

**Sketch-Proposal:**

- Requirements
- Considerations
- Cost Estimations
- Drawings

**Clients:**

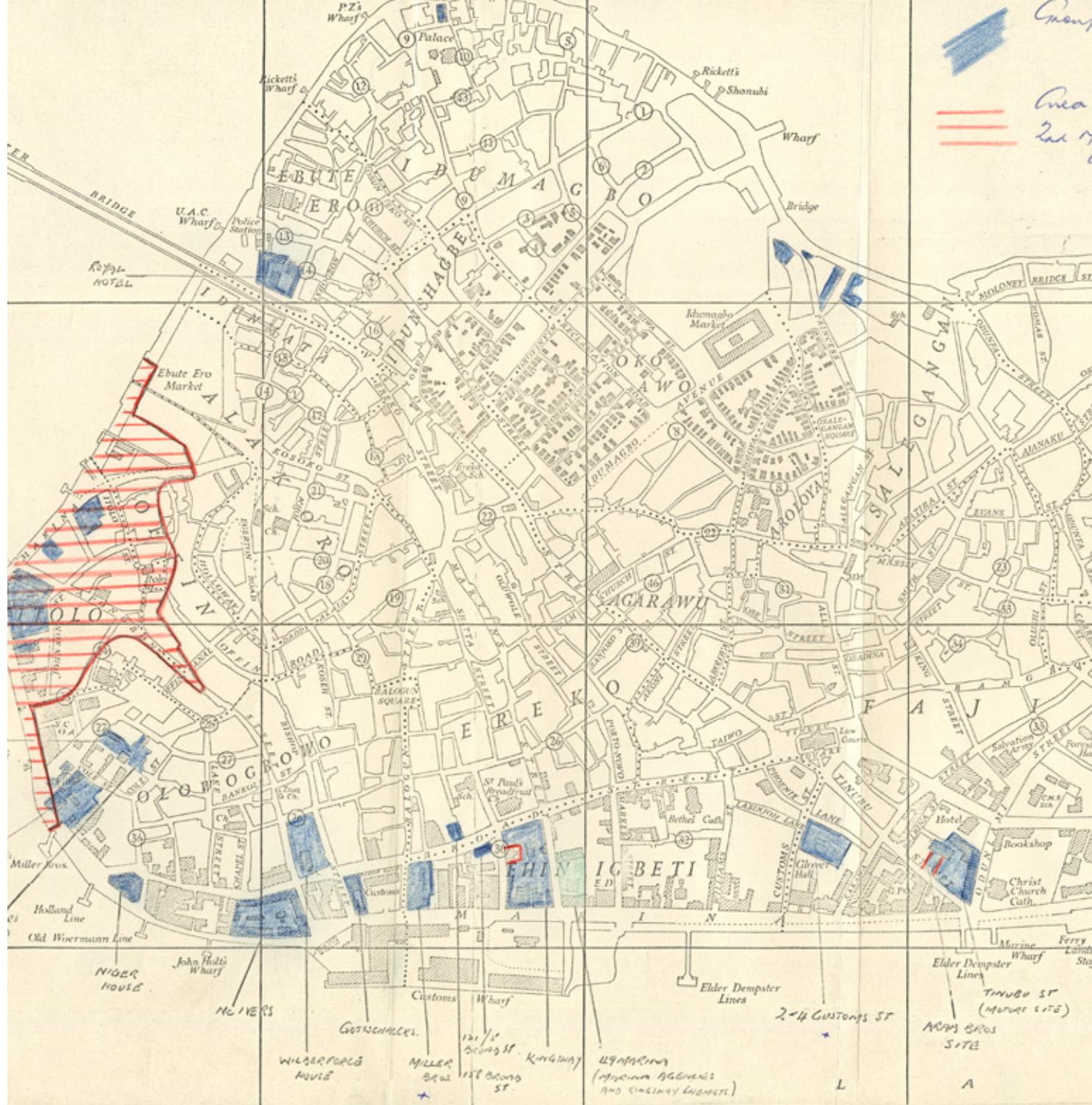
Ghana Commercial Bank  
Kingsway Ghana LTD



**DEWEGER, GRUTER & PARTNERS ARCHITECTS & CONSULTING ENGINEERS**

JOB 227A  
date: July 1974

# LAGOS



UAC/1/4/2/2/7/12, plan of Lagos Island showing United Africa Company properties shaded blue, including Lagos Kingsway, 1964



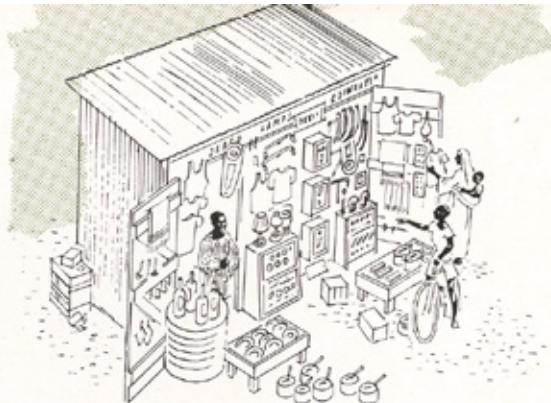
UAC/1/11/9/46/8

UAC/1/11/9/46, Lagos Kingsway, 1957

Career with The United Africa Company in West Africa

*(Right) A typical African owned retail store*

*(Below) One of the Company's modern departmental stores, Kingsway, Lagos*



UAC/1/11/18/2/23, A Career with the United Africa Company, 1950s

WHAT **MAKES** A DEPARTMENT STORE—No. 1



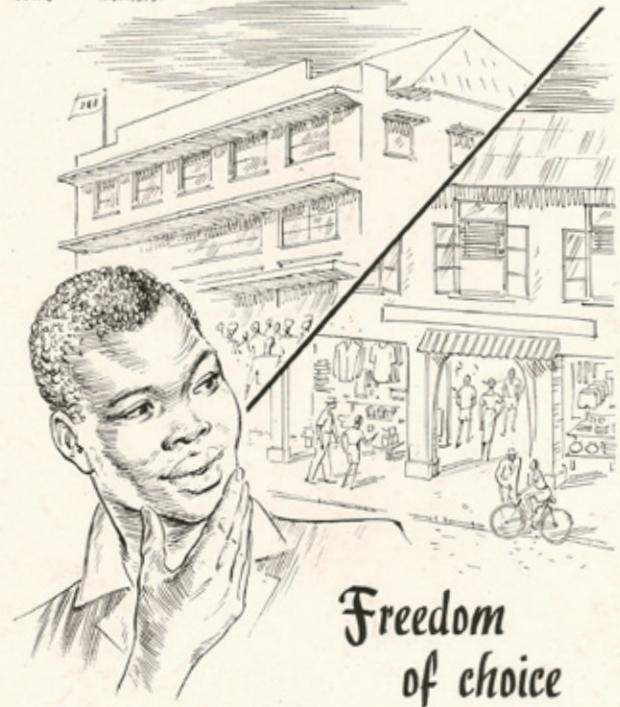
# Behind the scenes at...

THE CUSTOMER sees only half of a department store! In Kingsway, only half the floor-space is devoted to selling: the other half is taken up by offices and stockrooms where, day by day, arrangements are made to maintain stocks of the widest possible variety of goods, while thousands of miles away, expert buyers select from the world's markets, high quality articles to meet your needs.

**Kingsway**  
MARINA  
LAGOS

KINGSWAY STORES LTD. Box No. 562. Telephone Nos. 562, 563, 564

KSL 37



**Freedom  
of choice**

WHEN YOU go shopping and cannot find what you want at one dealer's, you go to another. And if he does not have what you like, there are still others to whom you may go until you find just what you want. You enjoy this great freedom of choice because there are many importing firms, European and African, who supply the goods you need. They are always competing with each other to bring you the kind of goods that will please you best.

Some of these companies sell direct to you. Others, like The United Africa Company, are principally wholesalers, and specialise in supplying African traders. But no single one of them has a monopoly of the trade.

*Of course, wise people make sure that every article they buy is of the best possible quality. That is why, out of every hundred articles sold in West Africa, thirty come from The United Africa Company.*

**THE UNITED AFRICA  
COMPANY LTD**

C194

*We all go shopping at Kingsway.  
You can't beat Kingsway  
for Value with Variety*



**Always  
a good  
deal  
for you  
at**

Shopping in Kingsway Stores is a pleasure and whenever you go there you will find many people enjoying that pleasure. There is a wide selection of goods of all kinds from which to choose and a large staff which has been specially trained to assist you in making your choice. There is comfort too and a high standard of service. These things added to the keen prices that are offered make shopping a real joy. All the best people shop at Kingsway.

**Kingsway**  
MARINA  
LAGOS

KINGSWAY STORES LTD. Box No. 562. Telephone Nos. 562, 563, 564

KSL/12/31



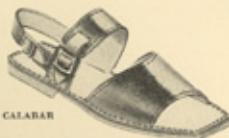
UAC/2/10/b1/8/1/5, A visit to Kingsway Lagos by the Oba of Lagos June 1965





they're cool  
they're comfortable  
they're

Clarks  
SANDALS



CALABAR

New exciting style for  
discerning gentlemen.  
Look for Clarks green label  
—it's a guarantee of quality that's  
known all over the world.

Wholesale inquiries only to Walter Clark & Sons (Overseas) Ltd., P.O. Box 518, Lagos.

For  
true elegance ..



Come to Kingsway and feast your eyes  
on wonderful fabrics, fashionable  
clothes, contemporary furniture . . .

everything you could possibly  
want—and at such reasonable prices.

And this fascinating range of top  
quality goods is conveniently  
arranged all under one roof so that  
shopping is a real pleasure.

Kingsway

... leads the way to modern living

Kingsway Stores of Nigeria Ltd.

A

i



## Departmental Stores



KINGSWAY STORES, MARINA, LAGOS



With nearly 700 stores where merchandise is sold and a wholesale service to every trading focus, The United Africa Company provides a vital artery for the commerce of Tropical Africa.

The latest outcome of the Company's enterprise is the great Kingsway Stores, opened at Lagos in 1948—probably the largest and most comprehensive retail store in these territories. Built as an experiment and designed, if successful, to be the forerunner of similar establishments in other cities, the Kingsway Stores brings all the benefits of a modern shopping centre to Africans and Europeans alike. It has already achieved an average of 3,000 transactions a day.

## KINGSWAY STORES LIMITED

UNILEVER HOUSE, BLACKFRIARS, LONDON, E.C.4

TIMBER • PLANTATIONS

\* MERCHANTISE • TRANSPORT  
PRODUCE • OCEAN SHIPPING



1 P/P

10 1/2 "

UAC/2/10/b1/8/1/10, Kingsway Lagos on the aerial view of the Marina, 1950s



KINGSWAY - LAGOS, MARINA EXTENSION.

W.H. MITCHELL LTD. LONDON E.C. 1950

UAC/2/10/b1/8/1/10, Artist impression of new proposed front elevation of Kingsway Lagos (design not executed), 1950s

# PORT HARCOURT



UAC/2/10/b1/8/1/6, Port Harcourt Kingsway, 1963

## Kingsway serves the Nation

The new Kingsway Stores in Port Harcourt,  
to be opened on 25th October by  
Doctor the Honourable M. I. Okpara,  
Premier of Eastern Nigeria, represents a capital  
investment of over £800,000 by  
The United Africa Company of Nigeria Limited.  
It stands as a symbol of confidence in Nigeria.

KINGSWAY STORES OF NIGERIA LIMITED



UAC/1/11/21/8, Kingsway serves the nation, 1961



UAC/2/10/b1/8/1/6, Port Harcourt Kingsway, façade detail and entrance, 1963



UAC/2/10/b1/8/1/6, the official opening of the Port Harcourt store by Michael Iheonukara Okpara, Premier of Eastern Nigeria, with E R Baines Director UAC London, October 1963



# SEKONDI

FILE REFERENCE: GHANA

DATE: 3194 INDEX NO: 3162

DESCRIPTION: KINGSWAY STORES  
& LOCATION: SEKONDI

CAPTION: EXTERIOR VIEW OF KINGSWAY  
AT SEKONDI

24/6/68 - Out of date  
Mr. K.A. Weaver

COPYRIGHT: "BY COURTESY OF  
THE UNITED AFRICA COMPANY LTD."

Photo by                   

REPRODUCTION FEE: 10s. 6d.



PLEASE RETURN TO:

U.A.C. INFORMATION DEPT.  
UNILEVER HOUSE, E.C.4.

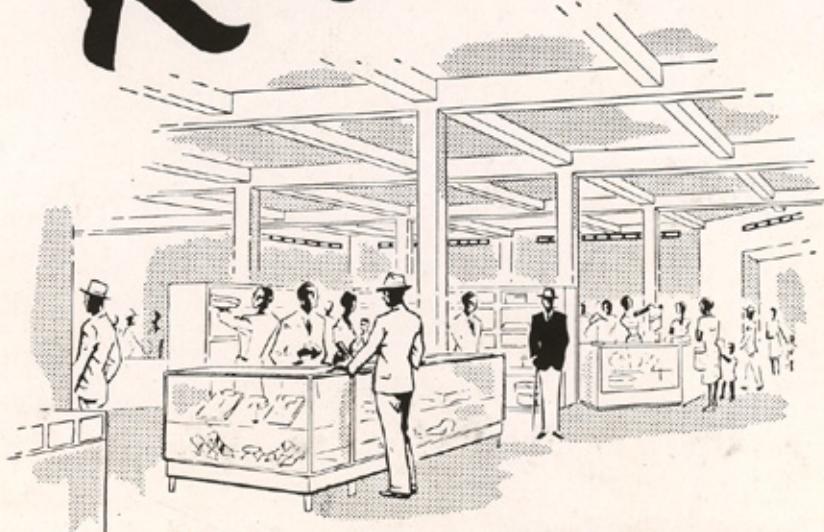
A NEW  
*Kingsway* STORES



OPENS NEXT WEEK

UAC/1/11/20/1, New Kingsway Sekondi Advertisement, c.1948

**NOW OPEN**  
*The NEW*  
**Kingsway** STORES



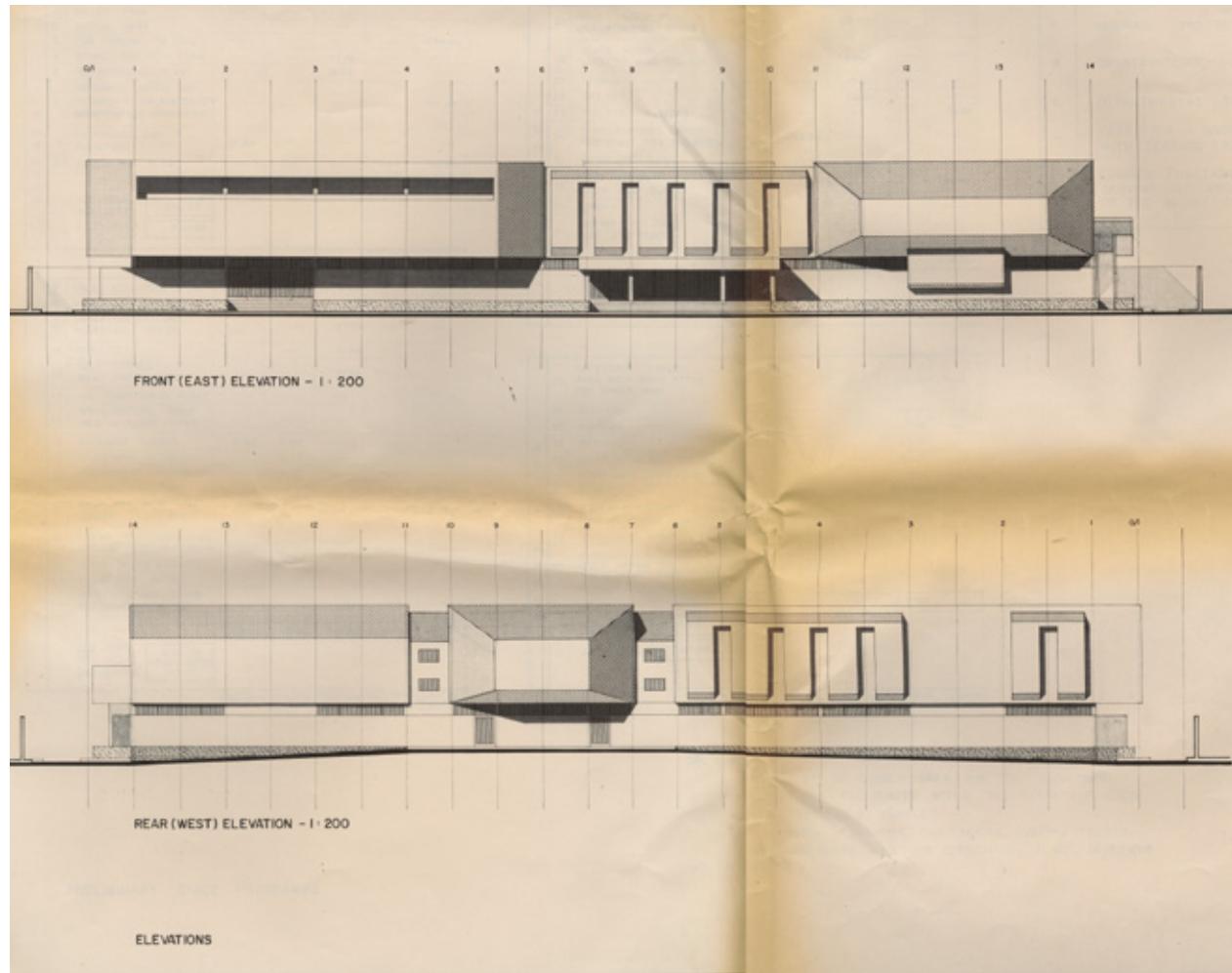
**in Main Road, SEKONDI**

**The most  
up-to-date and  
best stocked shop  
in Sekondi**

*Come shopping at Kingsway  
... save time  
... save trouble  
... save expense!*

**COME AND SEE THIS WONDERFUL NEW SHOP**

# SURELERE

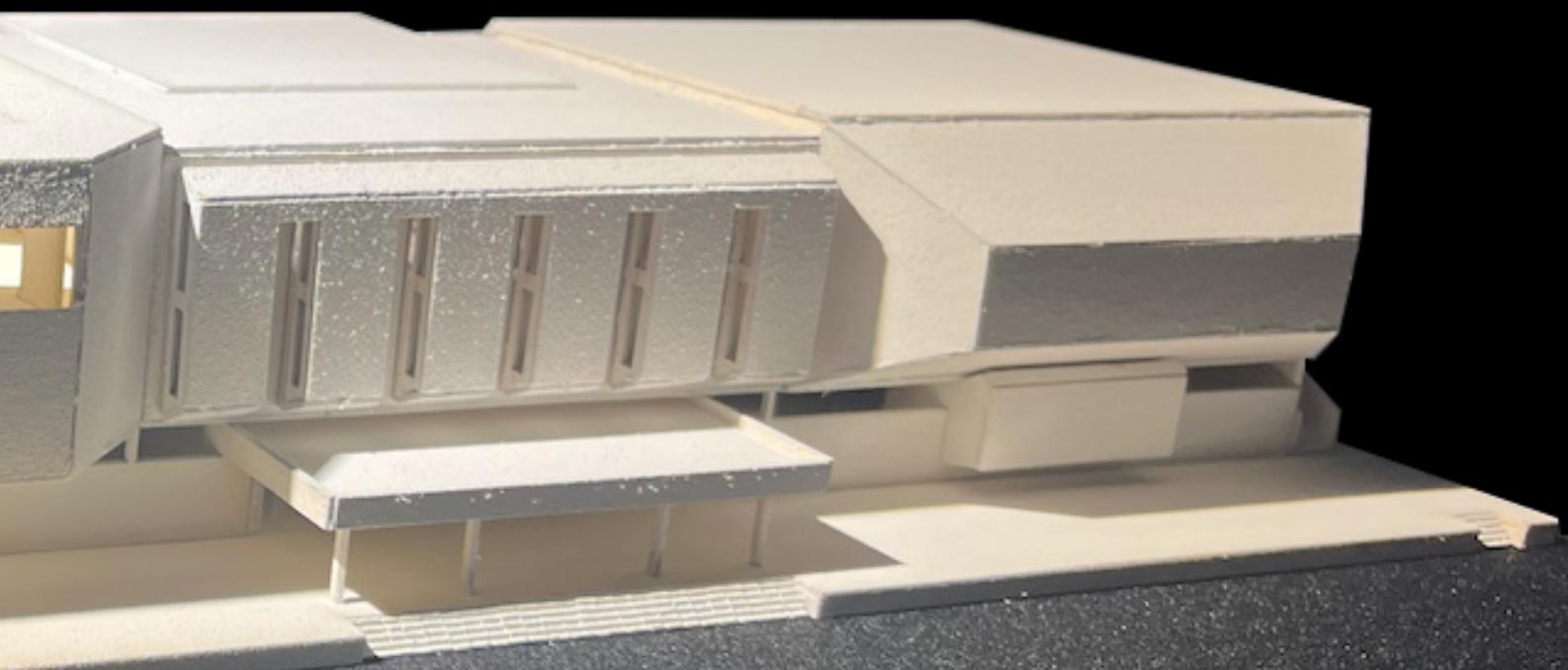


UAC/2/10/b2/4/2/10 proposed elevations of Ajao Road, Surulere development designed by Augustine Egbor, Marian Łyczkowski, Jerzy Luba, Grażyna Luba, 1976

CLIENTS	
BENEL CINEMAS, 25 ASSOCIATION AVENUE, LUPEAU INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, KORODU ROAD, LAGOS	
DATE	APPROVED BY
JOB REFERENCE EAP - 190	
JOB TITLE CINEMA COMPLEX WITH DEPARTMENTAL STORE AT AJAO ROAD, SURULERE, LAGOS	
DRAWN PRELIMINARY DESIGN	
FRONT (EAST) ELEVATION	
REAR (WEST) ELEVATION	
SCALE	1:200
ARCHITECTS	EGBOR & ASSOC
DRAWN	1976
TRACED	
RE	
A. A. EGBOR O. O. N. B. ARAKHOE F. A. F. I. CHARTERED & REGISTERED ARCHITECTS	
EGBOR & ASSOC architects & planners 36 ajani olujare alaka surulere p.o.box 1000 tel.	
DRAWING	REFERENCE
7	EAP 190



Model of Kingsway Surulere, 2024, model by Wei Jin, Sida Ran, Catherine Shi

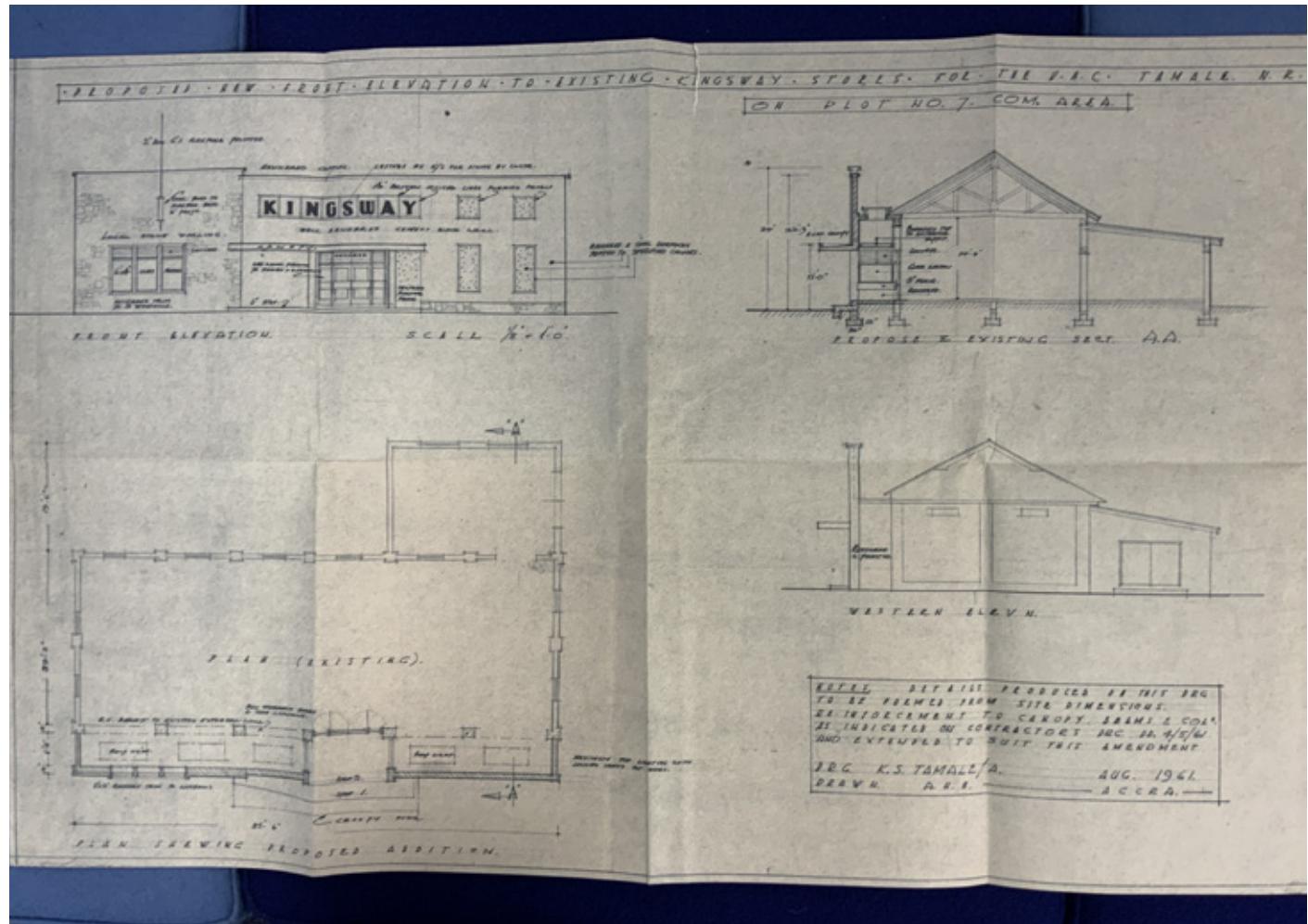


# TAKORADI



UAC-1-11-10-1-10 Kingsway Takoradi, 1958

# TAMALE



UAC/2/10/B3/4/3/5/1, Architectural drawings for new Kingsway Tamale, 1961 (architect unknown)

# TEMA

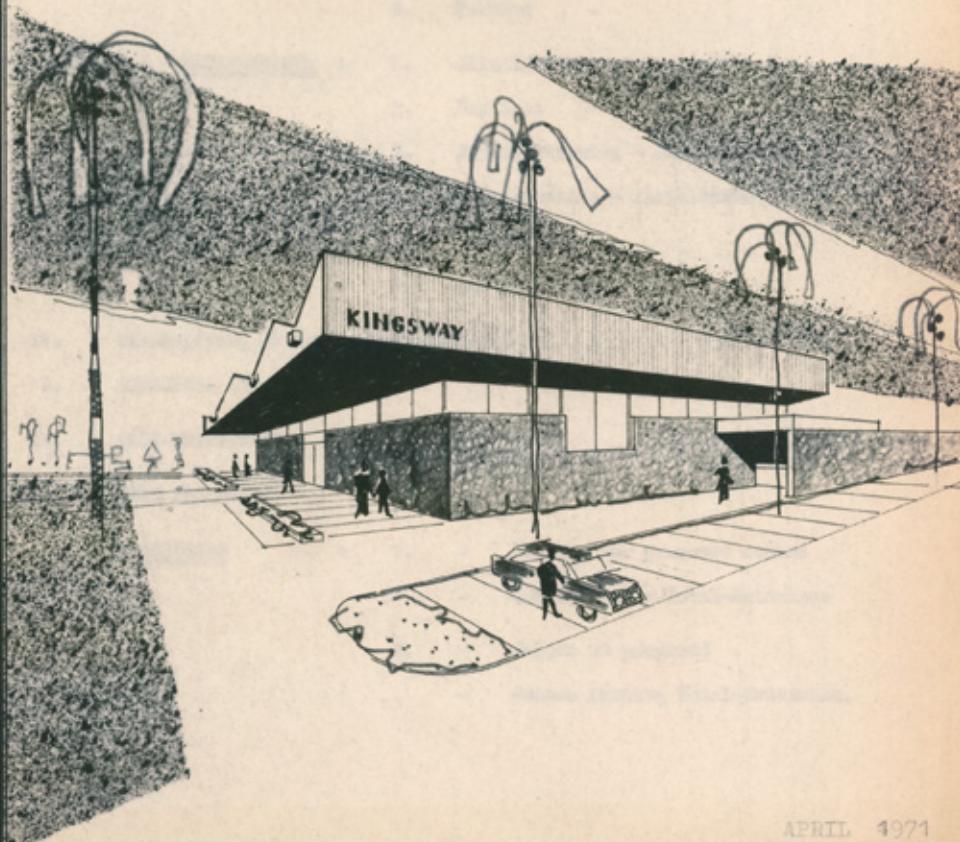


## KINGSWAY STORES OF GHANA LIMITED

SUPERMARKET AND COLD STORE DEPOT AT TEMA

### PRELIMINARY STUDY

- THE CLIENT'S REQUIREMENTS
- THE ARCHITECTS CONSIDERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
- COST ESTIMATION
- TIME SCHEDULE



APRIL 1971

ARCHITECTS AND CONSULTING ENGINEERS  
P.O. BOX 3504 ACCRA TEL. 6 62 59

**F.C. DE WEGER**  
ASSOCIATE : H. GRÜTER



UAC Photos Box21 2219, Kingsway Tema, Toiletries and Hardware, 1976



UAC Photos Box21 2219, Kingsway Tema, Fish and Meats, 1976

# VICTORIA (LIMBÉ) CAMEROON

1961 - Kingsway Victoria.

General Strike

The team of Buzu 'Maiguardi's'  
who loyally defended Kingsway  
Kano during the riot in 1964.  
The Headman is on the right  
of the photo.



UAC Box 7/2-4 2206, Kingsway Victoria, c.1968

# WARRI

# KINGSWAY MOVES TO WARRI, BOOMING OIL TOWN OF NIGERIA



■ ARTIST impression of the new Kingsway Stores, Warri.

## A joint British, Nigerian capital

WITH the rapid development of the oil industry in Warri, demand for a branch of Kingsway Stores to serve the needs of the community has been steadily growing. Arrangements have now been concluded, and the new Kingsway in Warri will be opened for business this morning.

The project is an example of a joint venture between Nigerian and British capital. The store is situated on the ground floor of a new prestige office block being erected by a local businessman, Chief J. Edewor, an investment running into six figures. The ground floor is being rented by Kingsway on a long lease paid in advance, thus assisting in the funding of the enterprise. The fitting-out and equipment of the store premises will represent a further investment by Kingsway of over £30,000.

The building is situated at the "River Valley Estate" in the

By A Correspondent

Effurun area, some two miles from the centre of Warri. This site has been selected as being an obvious area in which the Warri township will develop in future, and it is hoped the new building will form a nucleus for expansion. Already the estate comprises of a hotel, restaurant, and numerous other services, as well as a housing development. The office accommodation on the upper floors is expected to attract international businesses as tenants and a branch bank will be opened for the convenience of customers.

The layout of the building was suggested by Kingsway planners and the store area will be an

example of modern retail design. In this area, away from the congestion of the town centre, it will be possible to provide car parking for nearly 100 cars. An area for future expansion is also available.

The store sales area of over 5,000 square feet will be shared between a modern supermarket with cold store, and a self-selection department for non-foods. The latter will be of the latest "open-plan" layout, fully flexible for adaptation to the changing and developing needs of the community.

All shop fittings will be carried out with modern units specially constructed in Kingsway's own workshop to the highest standards, the same as may be seen in the recently modernised

Continued on page 12

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Branch of J.T. CHANRAI & CO. (P.H.) LTD.  
LAGOS—NIGERIA.



# ZARRIA



UAC-1-11-9-7-261, Kingsway Zaria, exterior, 1934



UAC-1-11-9-7-262, Kingsway Zaria, interior, 1934

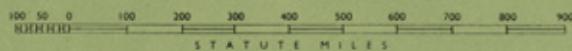


UAC-1-11-9-7-263, Kingsway Zaria, interior, 1934

THE MAIN TRADING STATIONS  
IN WEST AFRICA OF

*The United Africa Company Ltd.*

Scale, 1:15,269,760 or 241 miles to inch



○  
Merchandise  
Trading Stations

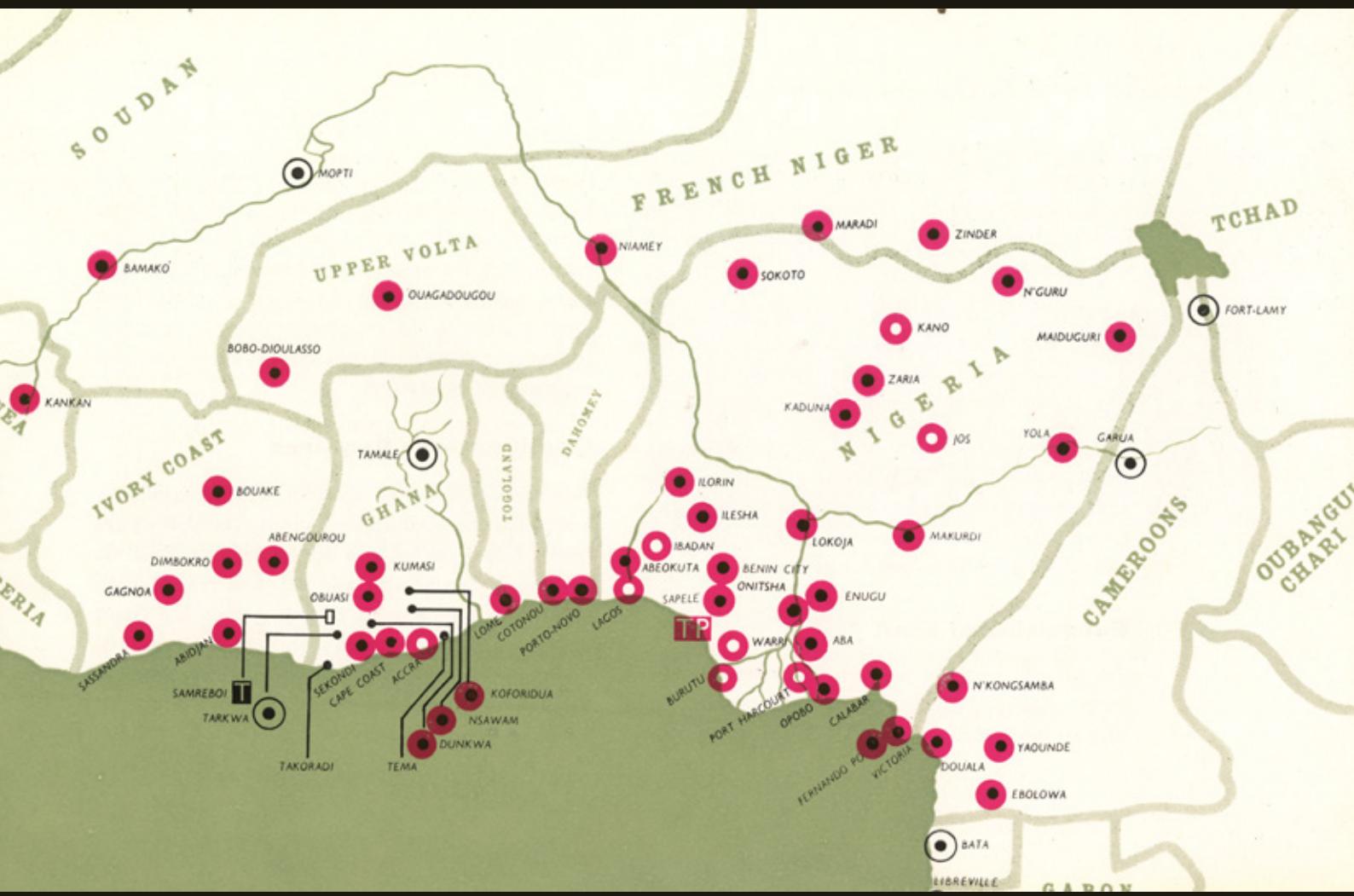
●  
Produce and Merchandise  
Trading Stations

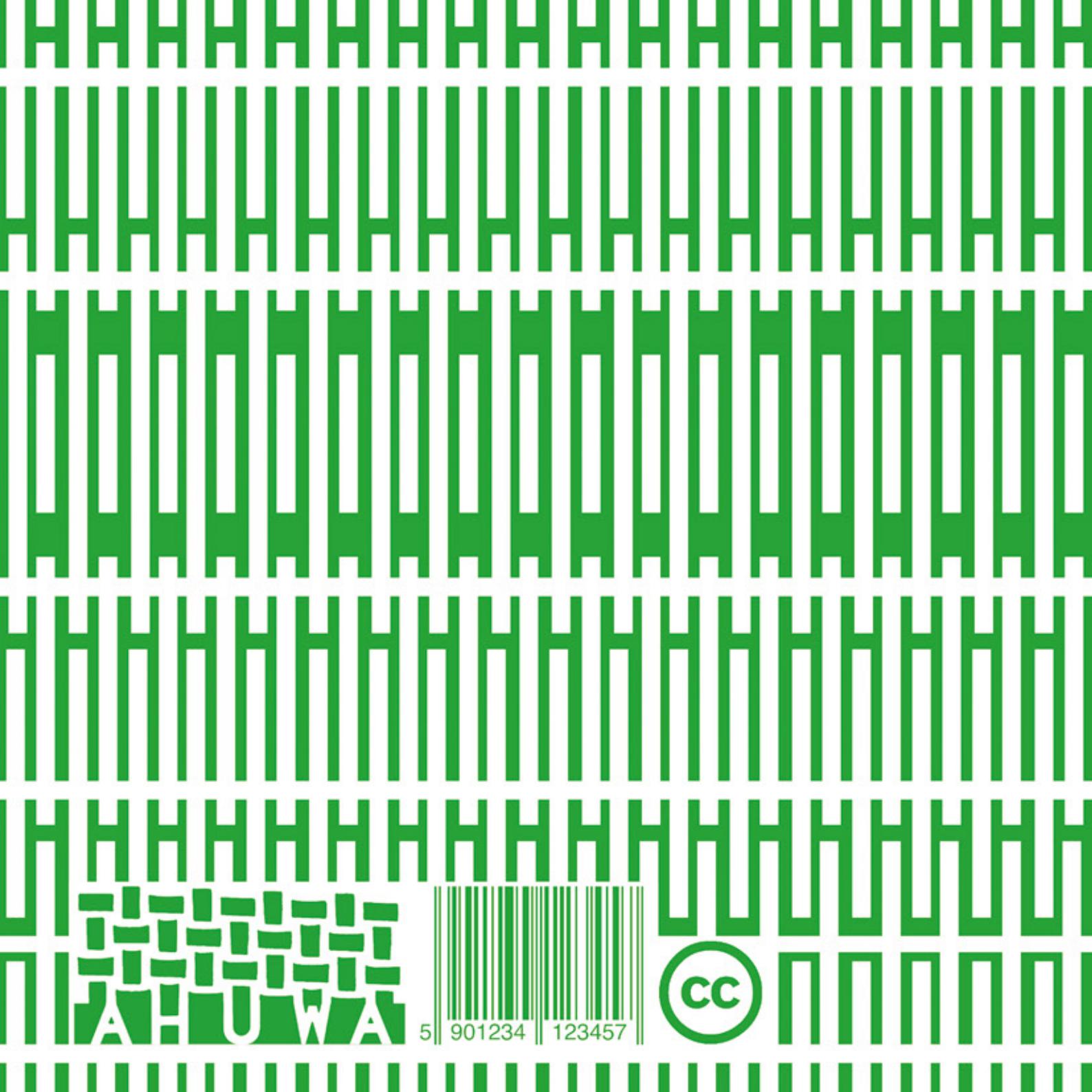
T  
Timber: Sawmill

TP  
Timber: Sawmill  
and Plywood

●  
General Managers  
Headquarters







5 901234 123457

