

Figure 9.23 Emir's Palace, Daura, interior of Zaure

Figure 9.24 Bicycle house, Zaria



9.23

features of this type are natural objects or animals connected to the group's totem while some simple decorations used by the Hausa resemble Tuareg fertility charms based on combinations of circle and triangle, *talbatana* (Figure 9.23). These are often placed beneath the arch at its point of junction with the wall, a particularly vulnerable structural point. With the introduction of Islam, Islamic symbolism based on arabic writing and holy artifacts such as the ablution kettle were incorporated into Hausa patterning. Such motifs never completely replaced older indigenous patterns and, more recently, along with modern features such as the bicycle, aeroplane and clock, they were worked



9.24

skilfully into the traditional patterns (Figure 9.24). Hausa city decoration tends to be restrained and has gone through periods when display of any form, except for a small minority, was discouraged. Even during those times of relative exuberance rich ornament was reserved for those parts of the structure thought to be in need of added support (Leary, 1977). Hausa builders do seem to adhere to the strictures of Pugin, though not quite in the terms in which he was writing (Pugin, 1841b).

SOCIAL STATUS AND DISPLAY

Leary has charted the path of Hausa decoration since the *Jihad* (Leary, 1975). He found that, in

addition to the iconoclastic mood of the early nineteenth century, it was also a time when display in terms of decorated buildings was confined to the rulers, their kinsmen and their appointees. The commoners, *talakawa*, linked to the ruling class through clientship and patronage, were not permitted to express themselves with such display. The gradual relaxation of sanctions against display in the twentieth century led to the development of city decoration by merchants and others sharing in the increasing prosperity. By the 1950s and 1960s decoration in the city was probably at its most extensive. The wealth created by the economic activity after the Second World War, together with the new found freedom of the merchant class, resulted in the outpouring and profusion of house decoration.

DECORATION AND CITY STRUCTURE

Within the apparently formless complex of buildings which comprise the Hausa city, the location and type of decoration tends to follow a definite pattern of development which is based upon the social, economic and administrative organization of the Hausa people. Quarters on the periphery of the town, occupied by strangers, are clearly distinguished and separated from the rest of the town by the hard edge of the remains of the town wall. *Tudun Wada* in Zaria is one such quarter. It is occupied by Muslim strangers. Here the controls restricting decoration were not strictly enforced, so that this particular area was the most highly decorated in the city and was brash compared with the more traditional areas (Figures 9.25 and 9.26). Within the walls of the old city, the area centred on the palace has its own restrained character. This is the quarter occupied by the extended royal families and related nobility. It has developed its own rather sedate environment comprising extensive compounds edged with high perimeter walls. Decoration tends to be restrained in contrast to *Tudun Wada* (Figure 9.27). Different



9.25



9.26

Figure 9.25 Tudun Wada, Zaria: decorated house

Figure 9.26 Tudun Wada, Zaria: local mosque