

DESERET SCHOOL OF DESIGN

2026 Alumni Design Competition

Category A: Architectural Design

Official Client Preamble

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Ghana's urban landscape is changing rapidly. Cities like Accra are absorbing a growing wave of young professionals, skilled workers, and small families who seek quality housing that reflects their aspirations — modern, secure, practical, and rooted in the Ghanaian context. Yet much of the residential stock available to this demographic either undershoots on design quality or overshoots on cost. The gap between what is available and what is needed represents one of the most pressing challenges — and opportunities — in Ghana's built environment today.

THE CLIENT BRIEF

You have been commissioned by a private real estate investor who is developing a modern residential property aimed at the growing urban housing market in Ghana. The client's goal is to create a high-quality yet practical residential development that balances aesthetics, functionality, and long-term investment value.

The client intends to build three (3) units of the same 3-bedroom residential apartments on a single parcel of land measuring 0.21 acres. The development must appeal to young professionals and small families seeking comfortable, modern living within an urban environment.

SITE INFORMATION

Land Size: 0.21 Acres

Zoning Context: Urban Residential

Site Plan: To be provided upon successful registration

Parking: Must be accommodated within the site

Access: Each unit must have its own independent access

DESIGN INTENT & EXPECTATIONS

Your design must demonstrate professional architectural thinking. The client expects:

- A site layout that maximises the 0.21-acre plot without compromising residents' quality of life
- Efficient floor plans that reflect how modern Ghanaian households actually live and work
- Elevations and massing that feel contemporary while remaining contextually grounded
- A clear sustainability strategy — passive cooling, rainwater management, and material efficiency are all valid approaches
- Realistic, buildable solutions — not conceptual proposals that cannot be constructed within a Ghanaian urban context
- Adequate circulation, ventilation, and daylighting across all three units

COMPETITION THEME ALIGNMENT

Your response to this brief must visibly engage with the competition theme: "Urban Living in Ghana." Consider what quality urban living in Ghana truly means — grounded, forward-thinking, and people-centred. Sustainability, climate responsiveness, cultural relevance, and modern aesthetics are all evaluation criteria. Your concept statement must articulate how your design responds to each.

DELIVERABLES

All architectural modeling and documentation must be produced in Autodesk Revit. Your submission must include:

1. Site Development Plan
2. Floor Plans (all levels)
3. Elevations (all faces)
4. Two Building Sections
5. 3D Exterior Views — minimum four (4)
6. Sustainability Strategy document
7. 400-word Concept Statement

Final presentation boards must be compiled in Canva. Participants will be asked to submit working Revit files for verification.

SOFTWARE REQUIREMENTS — CATEGORY A

Autodesk Revit: Compulsory for all architectural modeling and documentation. Floor plans, elevations, sections, and 3D views must originate from the Revit model. Working Revit files must be submitted for verification.

Canva: Compulsory for the final presentation board. All drawings, 3D views, sustainability strategy, and concept statement must be compiled and presented in Canva.

AI POLICY — CATEGORY A

Category A participants may use AI tools within the following permitted boundaries:

- AI is permitted for brainstorming, concept development, and design inspiration
- AI is permitted for generating mood board references and visual research
- AI-generated renderings are permitted — however, the underlying 3D model must originate from Revit
- AI may not replace the Revit modeling workflow — floor plans, sections, elevations, and drawings must be produced in Revit
- Presentation boards must be assembled in Canva — AI-generated layout tools are not permitted for this step
- AI usage must be disclosed in a one-line declaration within your concept statement
- Participants must be able to demonstrate authorship of the Revit model if requested by the judging panel

Violation of the AI policy will result in immediate disqualification.

For competition documents and project files, register at: <https://dsd.edu.gh/designcompetition/>
Registration Fee: GHS 150 | Email: admin@dsd.edu.gh | Phone: 055 666 2426