

# Preliminary Report for Ga Mashie Urban Design Lab, Spring 2011



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	iii
ABBREVIATIONS.....	iv
LIST OF MAPS .....	iv
LIST OF FIGURES .....	iv
LIST OF PICTURES .....	v
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	vi
I. INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1: Background of Study Area .....	2
1.2: Demographic Characteristic of Ga Mashie .....	2
1.3: Project Description.....	4
1.4: Objectives of Study.....	4
1.5: Methodology.....	4
II. KEY FINDINGS OF STUDY .....	6
2.1 Situational Analysis .....	6
2.1.1: Housing Situation.....	7
2.1.2: Land Use Situation.....	10
2.1.3: Roads Network.....	13
2.1.4: Open Spaces .....	14
2.1.5: Sanitation and Health .....	17
2.1.6: Economic Activities.....	21
2.1.7: Education and Other Infrastructure .....	25
2.2: Prospects for Tourism Promotion.....	27
2.2.1: Major Landmarks.....	27
2.2.2: Other Landmarks .....	29
2.2.3: Hallmark Events .....	33
2.3: Major Development Stakeholders at Ga Mashie .....	33

2.4: Limitations .....	35
III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	36
3.1 Conclusion .....	36
3.2 General Recommendations.....	36
3.2.1: Housing Redevelopment .....	36
3.2.2: Infrastructure Development: .....	37
3.2.3: Sanitation and Public Health .....	37
3.2.5: Economic Activities.....	38
3.3 Recommendations for Urban Design Lab (UDL) Team.....	39
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>41</b>

## ABBREVIATIONS

AMA	Accra Metropolitan Assembly
GAMADA	Ga Mashie Development Agency
GMMB	Ghana Museums and Monuments Board
GACEED	Ga Mashie Centre for Education, Environment and Development
HM	Housing the Masses
ILGS	Institute of Local Government Studies
MCI	Millennium Cities Initiative
OACADA	Old Accra Conservation and Development Association
UGL	University of Ghana, Legon
UNESCO	United Nations Education Social and Cultural Organization

## LIST OF MAPS

- 1: Study Area Map
- 2: Current Facilities in Ga Mashie
- 3: Economic Facilities in Ga Mashie
- 4: Sanitation and Health Facilities in Ga Mashie

## LIST OF FIGURES

- Figure 1: Population Trends in Ga Mashie
- Figure 2: Main Landuse Types in Ga Mashie
- Figure 3: Major Economic Activities in Ga Mashie

## LIST OF PICTURES

Picture 1:	Chinery House	Picture 45:	School children playing
Picture 2:	A section of Chinery House	Picture 46:	A JHS compound
Picture 3:	Edward House	Picture 47:	James Town Methodist JHS
Picture 4:	Wisdom House	Picture 48:	A School Library
Picture 5:	A two storey dilapidated house	Picture 49:	Children walking home from school
Picture 6:	A squatter occupied house	Picture 50:	A tarred road in Ga Mashie
Picture 7:	A Night Scene at Bukom square	Picture 51:	Road under construction
Picture 8:	Children riding bicycles	Picture 52:	An untarred artery road
Picture 9:	A section of roundabout	Picture 53:	High Street Road with Ussher Fort
Picture 10:	Inside the roundabout	Picture 54:	A busy alleyway
Picture 11:	Exterior of Mantse Agbonaa	Picture 55:	Road linking High Street
Picture 12:	A football game at Mantse Agbonaa	Picture 56:	A Paved alleyway
Picture 13:	Spectators watching football	Picture 57:	A tarred road
Picture 14:	Church Events at Night	Picture 58:	Frontage of Ussher Fort
Picture 15:	A public toilet and bathhouse	Picture 59:	Renovated section of Ussher Fort
Picture 16:	Public Toilet at Fishing Village	Picture 60:	Courtyard of James Fort
Picture 17:	A public refuse dump	Picture 61:	Entry Point to James Fort
Picture 18:	Itinerant Refuse collector	Picture 62:	Lighthouse from roadside
Picture 19.1:	Water sales point	Picture 63:	View of lighthouse from the beach
Picture 19.2:	Public bathhouse	Picture 64:	Methodist Church
Picture 20:	A view of the fishing village	Picture 65:	Sub-Chief's Palace
Picture 21:	Typical Street in Ga Mashie	Picture 66:	Renovated Brazil House
Picture 22:	Women making kenkey	Picture 67:	Vacant section of beachfront
Picture 23:	Smoking of fish	Picture 68:	Vacant land near slaughter house
Picture 24:	Woman smoking fish at sea shore	Picture 69:	Tent at the beach
Picture 25:	A Fishing Canoe	Picture 70:	Children playing at the beach
Picture 26:	A fish-smoking plant	Picture 71:	Photo with local boxing champion
Picture 27:	Trading at Salaga (Sraha) market	Picture 72:	Signboard of Joshua Clottey
Picture 28:	A Printing Press	Picture 73:	Mangroves in Korle Lagoon
Picture 29:	A Beauty Shop	Picture 74:	Korle Lagoon engulfed with waste
Picture 30:	Built-up residential setting	Picture 75:	Lagoon entering Atlantic Ocean
Picture 31:	Community Library		
Picture 32:	Barbering shop		
Picture 33:	Cosmetic factory		
Picture 34:	Trading in London market		
Picture 35:	Frontage of London market		
Picture 36:	Empty stalls at Salaga market		
Picture 37:	Trading under temporary structures at Salaga market		
Picture 38:	Petty trading at Salaga market		
Picture 39:	Women selling kenkey		
Picture 40:	Beach used as slaughter house		
Picture 41:	Korle Lagoon polluted with waste material		
Picture 42:	Nursery kids playing on the street		
Picture 43:	JHS pupils in a classroom		
Picture 44:	Compound of Sacred Heart Tech Institute		

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Historically at the heart of Accra and Ghana, Ga Mashie is located on the Atlantic Coast of the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. The area is referred to as Old Accra, due to the fact that it is where the original Gas first settled, thus making it the oldest community in Accra. Ga Mashie, constituting Ussher Town and James Town, covers an area of 100 hectares along the southwest coast of Accra. This division came about as a result of the influence of Europeans from the Netherlands, Britain and Denmark, who were allowed to build trading lodges on the coast in the 17th century.

This project is being undertaken upon the specific request of the Accra Metropolitan Assembly to the Millennium Cities Initiative (MCI), a project of the Earth Institute at Columbia University, to research, identify and develop urban and economic development interventions that can help create a balanced plan that both preserves the unique Ga Mashie cultural heritage and character, while revitalizing the area's local economy, in particular, tourism development and social entrepreneurship in the "informal sector." In close collaboration with the faculty and graduate students at the University of Ghana, Legon (UGL), and with the Institute for Local Government Studies (ILGS), MCI researchers spent two months researching and documenting the history in this important neighborhood as well as mapping current infrastructure assets in Jamestown.

The first phase of work involved a review of relevant literature regarding Ga Mashie's physical, community, and economic aspects of infrastructure. The second phase, the fieldwork itself, was the fulcrum of this research. It involved identifying community groups and individuals active in the Ga Mashie community, as well as relevant actors in government and the private sector; photo-documentation; plotting the coordinates of physical, economic and community infrastructure in Jamestown, using GPS and GIS technologies; and creating an inventory of infrastructure in Ga Mashie. With a considerable amount of research already conducted in the study area, the study team, after comprehensive meeting with Housing the Masses (HM) and upon completing the relevant literature review, focused mainly on the James Town section of Ga Mashie, which had not been studied in as much depth as had the neighborhood, Ussher Town.

The MCI-UGL team's literature review indicated that efforts at redevelopment have been undertaken through concerted support (research and advocacy) from government, through the Ga Mashie Development Agency (GAMADA), UNESCO, Old Accra Conservation and Development Association (OACADA), CHF International and other local and international Community Based Organisations (CBO,s) and NGOs. Out of these collaborative efforts two plans, the "Old Accra 2015 Strategy" and the "Redevelopment Strategy for James Town," were drafted. More recent attempts has involved Housing the Masses, a housing NGO, working with CHF International and financial institutions to develop a housing strategy for Ussher Town.

This study revealed that the community's current livelihoods are based largely on varied small scale economic activities. Fishing is still a major source of livelihood, though it cannot be

considered a major activity as small scale trading activities now dominate the community. With its high population density, Ga Mashie is now a completely built-up area, lacking adequate social and public amenities, such as parks, gardens and playgrounds. There are few schools, the water and power supplies are in a deplorable state and sanitation is a major area of concern, with the management of solid and liquid waste fraught with challenges. Drainage is virtually non-existent, with existing drains chronically choked with solid waste. The Korle Lagoon, which borders the community to the west, is contaminated with sediments, especially garbage. An effort by the government to dredge it through the Korle Lagoon Ecological Restoration Project (KLERP) has stalled. The roads running the community are in a slightly better condition, having seen some rehabilitation a few years ago. Unemployment is another major area of concern, as most youths can be found in front of their homes playing ludo<sup>1</sup> and draught during the day. Boxing, a historically important sport in Ga Mashie, is viewed as an important source of livelihood for male youth, many of whose aspirations aim to take flight from the worn floors of the neighborhood's boxing gyms.

Notwithstanding the current condition of Ga Mashie, the community has tremendous potential for regeneration, with an unlimited reserve of natural, human and historical resources that can be effectively harnessed to improve the livelihoods of the people. This study proposes several recommendations for community revitalization, for consideration by policy makers and development agencies. First, the Accra Fishing Harbour should be reconstructed, since fishing is still the single most important employer in the community. This will go a long way toward expanding the industry, hence creating more employment avenues for residents. Second, basic education needs to be prioritized by and within the community. Third, training in entrepreneurial skills should be developed and promoted. Fourth, sustainable tourism practices, such as pro-poor tourism, should be practiced, where local residents can manage the industry.

Furthermore, to facilitate the work of the Urban Design Lab in Ga Mashie, the study team propose some recommendations such as holding consultative meetings and multi-stakeholder planning sessions with the community members to get an insight into how Ga Mashie should look like in the next five years, include Mr. Tagoe in the preparation activities and sensitizing the studio students, which may require him going to New York, recruit a Ga speaking guide preferably a well known indigene.

Other recommendations have been discussed further in the conclusion and recommendation section.

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<sup>1</sup> A board game of two to four players. Players race their four tokens from start to finish using a dice

This report is structured into three main sections. The introduction provides details regarding the study area; a brief history of the Ga people, the background of the project; objectives of the study; and the methodology. Section 2 discusses the research findings regarding the current state of Ga Mashie's infrastructure, activities and socio-economic conditions. The final section presents the study team's conclusions and recommendations.

# I. INTRODUCTION

Increasing urbanisation and rapid population growth in urban Accra have created considerable pressure on limited existing infrastructure facilities. Ga Mashie, or “Old Accra,” has been in the past a dynamic, well-planned and very lively area, due in large measure to the colonial presence in the community. Ironically, this part of Accra has not seen any form of modern development since independence, although it borders the main Central Business District (CBD). It is now one of the most deprived and neglected urban areas in Accra with housing and other infrastructure in deteriorating state. Despite the intense level of deterioration and deprivation in “Old Accra” it still has the potential to attract economic growth and tourism.

Once a vibrant trading and commercial centre in Ghana, Ga Mashie became an important nodal point for trade in the pre-colonial and colonial periods. The location of Accra as a coastal terminus both for major international trade routes as well as between the coast and Ashanti contributed to its growth.

It is in this light that the Millennium Cities Initiative, at the request of the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA) and in partnership with the University of Ghana, Legon, conducted a field study of the Ga Mashie area, to ascertain the current situation there.

Map 1: Map of study area



Source: UMLIS and AMA

Map by: Sanggyun Kang, , Columbia University

## 1.1: Background of Study Area

Ga Mashie, also referred to as Ga and Old Accra, is part of indigenous Accra, consisting of James Town and Ussher Town and covering an area of almost 100 hectares along Ghana's southwest coast. Ga Mashie is home to the Ga people, the original settlers of Ghana's capital city who speak the Ga language.

During the colonial period, its strategic location made Ga Mashie the most appropriate place for the capital of the colonial government when it was transferred from Cape Coast. This act led to the increase in importance of Accra, in terms of economic and political power, and to its infrastructural development by the British. Gradually, the city also began to spread out in all directions. But a sequence of seminal events and circumstances over the years led Accra to lose some of its social, economic, political and physical importance.

First, the bubonic plague, which spread in 1908 with devastating consequences, forced the colonial power to indiscriminately demolish many houses, with further negative effects on the population. The earthquake in 1939 was another destructive event from which Ga Mashie suffered immense damage, in response to which most of the elites then living in the area moved out to the new developing residential areas in the north of the city, generating a detrimental outflow of wealth from the community. Perhaps a final blow came in 1962, when the newly independent government decided to move the main port to Tema, 40km to the east of Accra.

With this move, of course, Old Accra lost a strategic source of economic activity. Since then, the collapse of the local economy has been irreversible, with disastrous effects on the community (Quarcoopome, 1993).

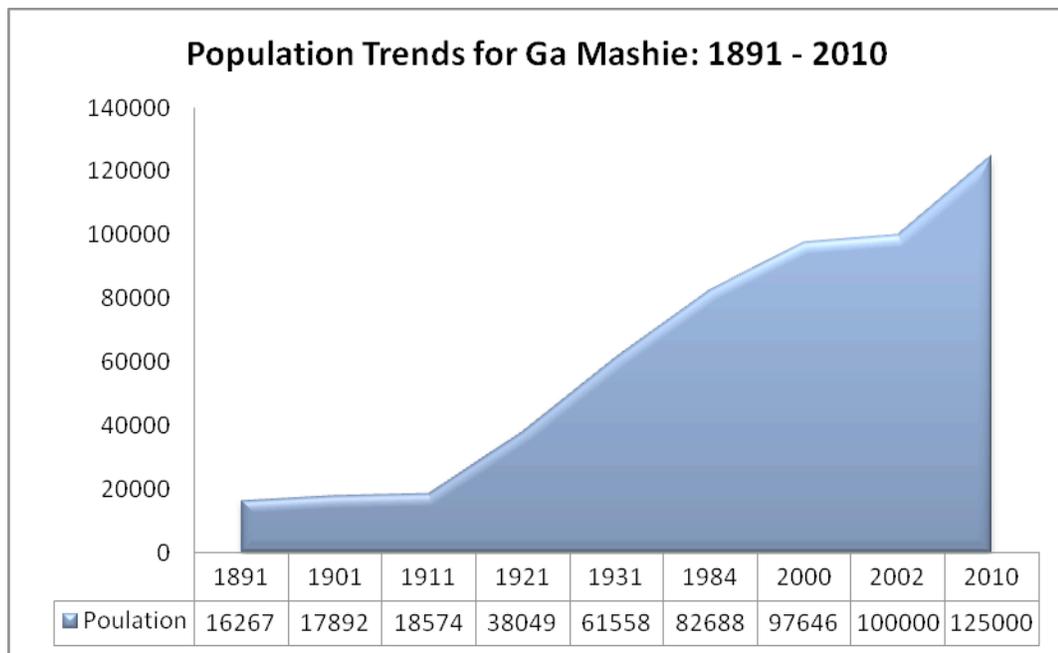
## 1.2: Demographic Characteristic of Ga Mashie

With recent data unavailable, the research team had to rely on old data to ascertain the current population of Ga Mashie. The Population and Housing Census in 2000 recorded a population of 97,646, which is close to GAMADA's own 2002 estimate of about 100,000 (GAMADA Factsheet, 2008). The Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) currently projects the area's population to be about 125,000 (GSS, 2010). Regardless of the precise number, it is clear that Ga Mashie's

population has grown steadily, ranking currently as one of the most densely populated communities in Accra (see figure 1).<sup>2</sup>

Ga Mashie is comprised of the oldest neighborhoods in Accra: Ussher Town and James Town. Ussher Town is made up of four quarters: Asere, Abola, Gbese and Otublohum; the other quarters, Akanmaadzen, Ngleshie and Sempe, make up James Town. Ga Mashie is principally inhabited by the Gas, of the Ga-Adangbe tribe, although a considerable number of non-Gas reside in the community, including Akans, Ewes, Guans and Mossi-Dagomba, as well as other foreign groups. Ga Mashie’s steady increase in population can be attributed both to natural growth and in-migration (Quartey-Papafio, 2006).

Figure 1: Population Trends in Ga Mashie



Source: Ghana Statistical Services Census Reports (2010)

<sup>2</sup> Even so, although the absence of data makes it difficult to compare exactly the rate of population growth in Ga Mashie, in recent years its population cannot be compared to that of Old Fadama, which has reportedly grown by some 60 percent in the last few years alone.

### 1.3: Project Description

The Millennium Cities Initiative (MCI), a project of Columbia University's Earth Institute, is working with the University of Ghana, Legon (UGL), to fulfill a request from the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA) to develop urban design and economic development interventions that can help balance the dual objectives of preserving Ga Mashie's cultural heritage and character with revitalizing the area's economy, in particular, via tourism development and potentially scalable entrepreneurship in the informal sector.

MCI commissioned a team of researchers from Columbia University and UGL to conduct research in the community and to review the literature produced from earlier AMA collaborations with local and international agencies that had focused on various aspects of developing Ga Mashie. The findings from this study will serve as a guide for a Columbia University urban design laboratory in the spring of 2011, as part of the overall MCI-Accra effort.

### 1.4: Objectives of Study

The study has the following specific objectives:

- To determine the current conditions and accessibility to, sewerage, potable water, public spaces and other community infrastructure;
- To ascertain the current housing conditions and ownership structures within the community;
- To identify the major stakeholders, their roles and avenues for possible collaboration in the redevelopment of Ga Mashie;
- To document important historical buildings and their current conditions;
- To identify opportunities for tourism and other economic activities, and to make recommendations regarding how best to realize the community's economic potential

### 1.5: Methodology

In the course of its fieldwork, the research team interviewed active community groups and individuals, as well as relevant bodies in government and the private sector. The AMA is collaborating with some identifiable local and international organizations on numerous projects, some of which are located in the Ga Mashie community. Key persons in these organizations were also interviewed, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication of research efforts.

Additionally, the team conducted field studies of the community including photo documentation of the study area, GPS plotting, Geographical Information Systems (GIS) mapping and inventorying of infrastructure.

The methodology is summarized in two phases:

Phase 1: Literature Review from the following

- The Old Accra Integrated Urban Development and Conservation Framework

- The Old Accra 2015 Strategy
- GAMADA Factsheets
- Other relevant materials (academic journals and other publications, Internet and other news sources)

#### Phase 2: Fieldwork

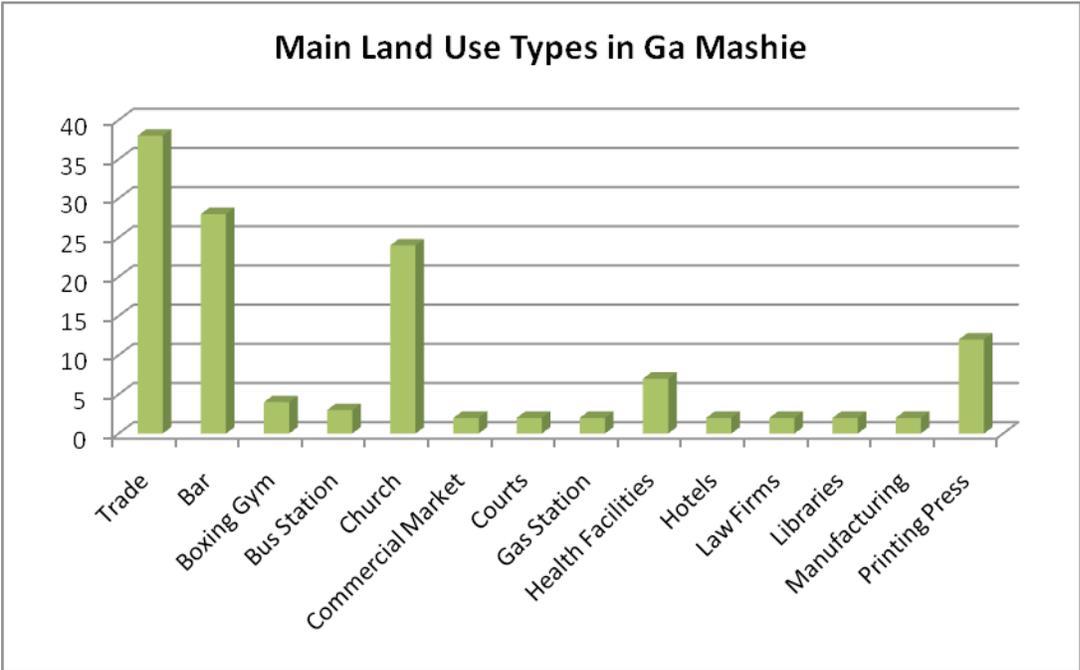
- Meetings and discussions with major stakeholders in Ga Mashie;
- Interviews with selected households (see appendix for questionnaire);
- Inventorying many of the economic, social, community and touristic activities in Ga Mashie;
- Thorough photo documentation of infrastructure within the area

## II. KEY FINDINGS OF STUDY

*The first part of this section delves into the current state of community infrastructure and the prospects for redevelopment in Ga Mashie; the second part describes the major stakeholders involved in this work.*

### 2.1 Situational Analysis

Figure 2: Main Land Use Types in Ga Mashie



Source: MCI-UGL Team Fieldwork, 2010

## 2.1.1: Housing Situation

In James Town, the most dominant building type is the double-storey compound house. Very often these houses are arranged into clusters connected to each other via alleyways. From the aerial viewpoint, the buildings appear scattered and unplanned. But according to architectural historian and ex-mayor of Accra Mr. Nat Amarteifio, the Gas' style of cluster home design came about as a result of the frequent slave raids during the era of slave-trading.<sup>3</sup> Since most of the structures were built over 80 years ago and have been passed on by, and to, generations of family members, the most common form of home ownership is a communal one, by the extended family.

The houses usually accommodate an average of more than five families residing within a single property.<sup>4</sup> As stated above, the Ga Mashie area has a very high population density, with migrant settlers from other parts of Ghana continuing to move into the area.<sup>5</sup> However, although the population numbers continue to increase, the housing stock continues to hold steady. As a result of the high demand, most home owners, in an effort to increase their rental income, have converted their kitchens and/or storage spaces into bedrooms, thereby pushing their own ordinary household activities (e.g., cooking) into the street.

### *A Closer Look at Housing*

Most of the houses in the Ga Mashie area are built of sandcrete blocks and bricks and roofed with aluminum sheeting, slate or sheets of asbestos. In Ga Mashie, where ceremonies such as funerals and outdoorings<sup>6</sup> are of great importance, members of the family will contribute to have the family house painted before such events are observed or celebrated. As a result of this tradition, an average house in the area is painted at least once every five years.<sup>7</sup>

The alleyways connecting the houses are unpaved dirt paths. In talking to residents it became evident that the alleyways flood and become muddy whenever the rainfall is heavy.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The somewhat puzzling cluster arrangements had the effect of confusing the slave raiders, giving the Ga enough time to organize and defend their families, in the event of a slave raid.

<sup>4</sup> Of the six homes interviewed, most had an average of 20+ residents living in the house..

<sup>5</sup> Because Ga Mashie is close to the Central Business District in Accra–Central, there is an elevated demand for accommodations in the area.

<sup>6</sup> Ceremonial events organized to formally initiate new born babies into the family and community

<sup>7</sup> In recent times, however, some of the houses in the community have been painted with the red or yellow colors used by the telecommunication companies, (Vodafone and MTN, respectively) who fund the painting of structures.

<sup>8</sup> NGOs such as CHF International have partnered with the Home Finance Corporation (HFC) Bank to pave a few of the alleyway sections in James Town; see picture #56.

From the field study we were able to classify the housing stock of Ga Mashie into three main categories:

- Category 1 – Houses in good condition

Houses found in this class, built post- independence, are often well-maintained and structurally stable. They are located on a single plot of land, are sometimes walled and were built to conform to the Ghanaian building codes.

- Category 2 – Houses in average condition

These houses are structurally stable but not well-maintained. Very often, houses in this class have been subdivided and rented out, with poor distant relatives authorized to collect rents and supervise the property, in the absence of the often wealthier owners themselves.

- Category 3 – Houses in deplorable conditions

This type of structure hovers between being structurally unstable and structurally dangerous. Built during Ghana’s colonial era, probably between the late 1800s and the early 1900s, these buildings’ owners generally live outside the community and rent out their property. In some cases, the buildings have been neglected and have been occupied by squatters.

### Category 1 Housing



Picture 1: Chinery House



Picture 2: A section of Chinery House

## Category 2 houses



Picture 3: Edward House



Picture 4: Wisdom House

## Category 3 housing



Picture 5: A two storey dilapidated house



Picture 6: A squatter-occupied house

Finally, it is important to note that squatters and residents within the community have erected some shacks in alleyways, blocking access to other buildings and eliminating all potential emergency access points.

## 2.1.2: Land Use Situation

### *Land Ownership Structure*

As in other parts of Ghana, the chiefs of James Town and Ussher Town, referred to as Mantse, hold land in trust for their communities. Though any community member has a right to the use of land, land in Ga Mashie is mainly stool- (by the chiefs) and family-owned. In the past, certain individual members of the community were rewarded with large tracts of land for distinguishing themselves. This practice led to the evolution of a family land system and the individualization of land rights, resulting in turn in an extensive pattern of family land ownership, with the stools consequently losing control of large tracts of land.

### *Current State of Land use*

Residential facilities dominate the land use structures of Ga Mashie. Over a long period, the residential setting in Ga Mashie has remained unplanned. The community's densely built-up structure has been noted as a critical disincentive for programmes that sought to plan and/or upgrade the Ga Mashie area.



*Picture 30: Built-up residential setting*



*Picture 31: Community Library*



*Picture 32: Barbering shop*



*Picture 33: Cosmetic factory*

A few manufacturing industries, such as M&G Pharmaceuticals, Universal Cosmetics and a government-bonded warehouse also exist in the area. Commercial activities in the community take place largely in the two markets, London and Salaga, which serve as important centres for trade in all kinds of local items.

The two markets are in deplorable condition, lacking basic necessities. At the Salaga market, rehabilitation efforts that began more than 12 years ago have stalled. Consequently, traders have relocated from the main market to the streets in order to pursue their activities, creating significant inconvenience not only for the traders themselves, but also for shoppers and for those hoping to park their vehicles. Car parks have also been taken over for these trading activities.



*Picture 34: Trading in London market*



*Picture 35: Frontage of London market*



*Picture 36: Stalls under reconstructing at Salaga market*



*Picture 37: Trading under temporary structures at Salaga market*

All kinds of street trading, day and night, also exist in the community, much of which extends to the home. It is common to find petty trading stores set up in front of private houses. Food-processing is the most common activity engaged in by most households, and kenkey<sup>9</sup> is sold in front of many Ga Mashie homes.



*Picture 38: Petty trading at Salaga market*



*Picture 39: Women selling kenkey*

The Korle Lagoon, a crucial wetland now in a severely degraded state, stretches from the old harbor to the site of the now-vacant slaughterhouse. Unauthorized activities, including a make-shift slaughterhouse, still operate along some sections of the beachfront, adjacent to a public toilets and a refuse dump.



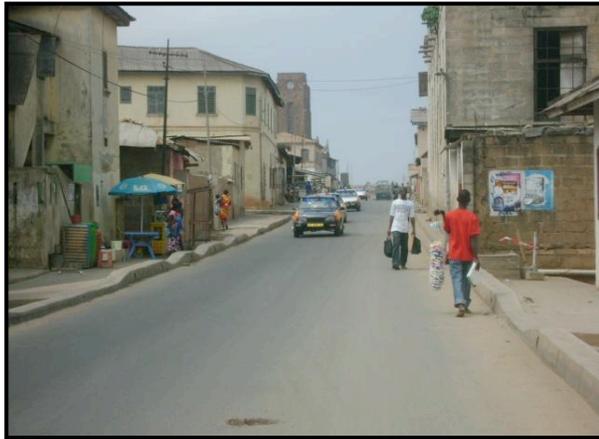
<sup>9</sup> Kenkey is popular Ghanaian dough made from fermented maize and sometimes cassava and served with a vegetable stew or soup and fish.

*Picture 40: Portion of beach used as slaughterhouse*

*Picture 41: A Korle Lagoon polluted with waste material*

### 2.1.3: Roads Network

A comprehensive network of roads exists in Ga Mashie, connecting the sub-metro to many parts of Accra. Some main arteries include Guggisberg Avenue, High Street and Asafoatse Nettey Street. Within Ga Mashie, Bannerman Road serves as the boundary separating Ussher Town from James Town.



*Picture 50: A tarred road in Ga Mashie*



*Picture 51: Road under construction*



*Picture 52: An untarred artery road*



*Picture 53: High Street Road with Ussher Fort*



*Picture 54: A busy alleyway*



*Picture 56: A paved alleyway<sup>10</sup>*

*Picture 55: Road linking High Street*



*Picture 57: A tarred road*

Most of the main roads are now in quite good condition, having seen some rehabilitation works in 2006. The High Street Road especially, through to Korle Bu, is first-class. A few artery roads have also been resurfaced, even as others remain in poor condition. Traffic lights are non-existent across the study area, which, as observed by the study team, leads to periodic conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles.

#### 2.1.4: Open Spaces

Historically, public space in Ga Mashie has been seen as a live-in space utilized for various kinds of public activities; funerals, sleeping and conception of children. Ga Mashie is so built up that there is no space for greenery and other public infrastructure, such as public parks. Because of the dearth of available public or private space, the streets effectively become part of the homes where people carry out such household chores as cooking and laundry. When there is a funeral,

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<sup>10</sup> A successfully completed project venues of CHF International and the Home Finance Corporation (HFC) Bank, which have joined forces to pave some alleyway segments in James Town.

the streets are blocked to create extra space to accommodate guests. Space is therefore a hugely limiting factor in old Accra, making it difficult to hold recreational or social functions in public spaces.

### *Bukom Square*

The Bukom Square plays a very key role in old Accra. It is used for all forms of social functions and serves as an important playground for children. The place is also used for such sporting activities as football and boxing. Bicycles and tricycles are rented out to children in the square, turning it into an important playground day and night. In the evenings, the park is transformed into a vibrant canteen, or food court, where different varieties of prepared foods are sold.



*Picture 7: A Night Scene at Bukom Square*



*Picture 8: Children riding bicycles at Bukom square*

### *Community Centre*

This colorfully painted area, found in the centre of a road as a roundabout, is used for such social functions as parties, funerals and traditional meetings. This place has a special importance for the people of James Town, even though it clearly cannot be used for large functions. A notice board permits people to book the place in advance, to avoid possible clashes. Aside from serving as a meeting place and children's playground, sporting activities such as table tennis are also carried out there. The place is kept very neat and is rimmed by cement benches. During such social event as outdoorings, a portion of the street is blocked with canopies. The area is also used informally as a sleeping site during the night.



Picture 9: A section of the Roundabout



Picture 10: Inside the Roundabout

### *Mantse Agbonaa Park*

Just in front of the James Town Mantse Palace, Mantse Agbonaa Park, apparently James Town's biggest multi-purpose open space, serves as the site of all social functions including durbars and other traditional meetings. In the mornings, some portion of it serves as a parking space, while in the late afternoons, the same space doubles as a football field. On Thursday afternoons, special football competitions are held there, attracting large crowds from all over the community.



Picture 11: Exterior of Mantse Agbonaa



Picture 12: A football game at Mantse Agbonaa



*Picture 13: Spectators watching football at Mantse Agbonaa*



*Picture 14: Church Events at night*

### *James Town District Police Headquarters*

The community's only police station also serves as the district headquarters of the Ghana Police. The station has a sizeable open space which serves as a playground for children and as the venue for other community events.

In addition to all the open spaces identified, small open spaces exist in compound houses where children also play. However, these spaces are mostly encroached upon by other sub-structures and are privately managed. For example, in compound houses where kenkey is produced, the open spaces serve as food-processing sites. During gatherings such as funerals and outdoorings, the compound space is not sufficient to contain the numbers of those assembled, causing street blockages in order to create more temporary gathering space and aggravating vehicular congestion.

### 2.1.5: Sanitation and Health

#### *Public Toilets*

Most of the houses were built in the late 1800s and the early 1900s and they are not fitted with toilets and bathrooms. Even now, only a few homes have access to in-house toilet facilities.

Homes not fitted with toilets rely on one of James Town's six public toilets.<sup>11</sup> Each toilet facility has on the average 24 stall units, with 12 units serving males and 12 serving females. Given the irregular flow of water in the James Town area, toilets are serviced with water supplied by water barrels drawn on human-drawn carts. It costs 20 Ghana pesewas to use a toilet facility. Nevertheless, the high population density makes it difficult for toilet attendants to keep the facilities clean. The construction of more public toilets preferably pit latrines will be a first step in the right direction.



*Picture 15: A Public toilet and bathhouse village*



*Picture 16: Public toilet at fishing*

### *Solid Waste*

It is estimated that every 100 households generate two cubic meters of solid waste everyday in Ga Mashie. ZoomLion Ghana Ltd., a leading Ghanaian waste management company, collects solid waste from the households in James Town on a daily basis, for a fee of 50 Ghana Pesewas (USD 0.40). Some residents try to avoid this charge by dumping refuse into the open drains and onto vacant and abandoned neighborhood properties.

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<sup>11</sup> A 20 Ghana Pesewas (0.14 USD) usage fee is charged per use of the public toilet. Those residents unable to pay the charge use the shoreline as a toilet facility; others use the shoreline because they find it to be more sanitary than the public toilets.

The collected refuse is then transported to one of the six refuse collection points located at various sites across the community.<sup>12</sup> Formalized recycling is not a common practice, although clear recycling patterns have become routine, as scavengers sort through waste piles for metal scraps that they can then sell to smelting plants across the country. Most communal refuse dumps are sited in the same parcel where sanitation facilities are sited, creating a public health hazard. When refuse collection is delayed, the stench emitted and consequent health-related problems can be quite severe. Some residents dump their waste at night, directly into gutters, the streams (lagoon) or other open spaces.



*Picture 17: A public refuse dump*



*Picture 18: Itinerant refuse collector in James Town*

### *Bathrooms*

Most homes locate their bathrooms (bathing areas) outside the house. Bathrooms, most of which are built with masonry blocks or timber planks, are normally sited next to or on the drains, for the easy disposal of wastewater, which goes directly into the gutters. It is important to note that the bathrooms also double as urinals, since there are no public urinals in the area.

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<sup>12</sup> Refuse dumps are normally located next to the public toilets, which are in close proximity to private residences. The dumpsters are lifted up and emptied every two days, raising public health concerns regarding the possible outbreak of disease, given the proximity of the community and the fact that dumpsters often sit uncovered until the refuse is hauled away.

## *Health Facilities*

There are two government-run clinics in the area: Ussher Polyclinic, which deals with all manner of cases, from malaria, complex deliveries, to sex education, and the James Town maternity home, which deals exclusively with maternity and post-natal cases. Both public facilities, which are managed by the Accra Metro Health Directorate, face serious resource challenges even in the priority MDG-related areas of maternal and neonatal survival and the treatment of infectious diseases.<sup>13</sup> In addition, the privately run Sea View Clinic and Medical Laboratory is housed on the premises of the Sea View Hotel<sup>14</sup>. All these health centers refer their major medical cases to the Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital, which is less than one kilometer from the western border of Ga Mashie.

## *Water Supply*

Most homes are connected to the main water supply network of the Ghana Water Company Limited (GWCL). In our interactions with some residents, it became clear that water supply is intermittent, with water available only four days per week, on average. Community residents, therefore, fill up gallons and barrels, for use when the water supply is cut off. Houses without access to the water supply network purchase their water from neighbors who have taken such precautions.<sup>15</sup>



*Picture 19.1: Water sales points*



*Picture 19.2: Public bathhouse*

<sup>13</sup> In recognition of this deficit, MCI has brought in trainings in neonatal resuscitation, to take place at Ussher Polyclinic, for the benefit of teams of medical practitioners from all of Accra's sub-metro facilities.

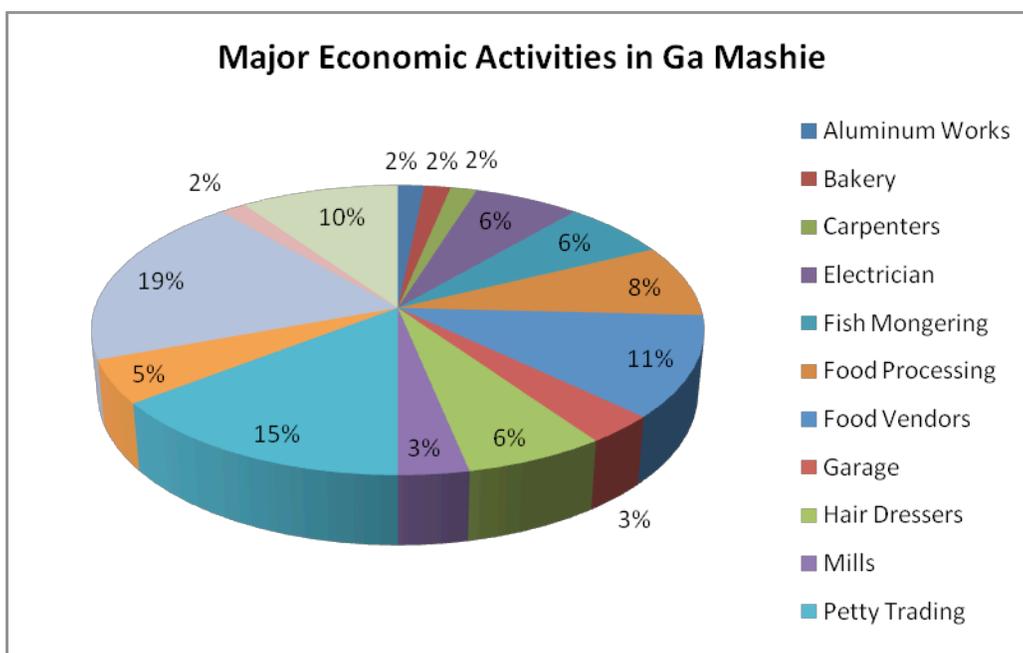
<sup>14</sup> This is believed to be the oldest hotel in Accra, used once by David Livingstone in the course of his travels.

<sup>15</sup> The price of a bucket ranges between 5- 8 Ghana Pesewas.

### 2.1.6: Economic Activities

Traditionally, the primary industry of occupation for the people of Ga Mashie has been fishing, which currently employs about 16,000 people.<sup>16</sup>Historically, the industry has always contained a division of labor, between the men, who are involved in the actual fishing activities, and the women, who have been responsible for preservation, marketing and trading.<sup>17</sup>

Figure 3: Major Economic Activities in Ga Mashie



Source: Field survey, 2010

<sup>16</sup> According to the director of the fishermen’s union.

<sup>17</sup> The Gas have always viewed trading as part of the women’s domain.



*Picture 20: A view of the fishing village*



*Picture 21: A typical street in Ga Mashie*



*Picture 22: women making kenkey*



*Picture 23: Smoking of fish*

A lot of the women in the James Town area are fishmongers who sell their products in the Salaga and London markets; other women produce and sell kenkey to community residents. Petty trading plays a major role in the area; most traders have too little capital to engage in large-scale

trading so they set up kiosks and tables in front of their homes and sell items such as calling cards and sweets.<sup>18</sup>



*Picture 24: Woman smoking fish at the seashore*



*Picture 25: A fishing canoe*



*Picture 26: A fish-smoking plant*



*Picture 27: Trading at Salaga (Sraha) market*

It is important to note that although Ga Mashie is close to the Central Business District (CBD), there are no banks or formal banking systems in the area, apart from two micro-credit centers

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<sup>18</sup> Start-up capital for petty trading normally comes in the form of a gift from wealthy family members who live outside the community.

(susu) in the area.<sup>19</sup> The absence of a formal financing system has limited the potential for growth within the local economy.

Apart from fishing and trading, there are printing presses and three manufacturing companies in the area that could become good avenues for employment. The three companies are M&G Pharmaceuticals which manufacture pharmaceutical products such as tablets, capsules and syrups; Universal Cosmetics (GHC) Ltd deals in cosmetics and personal care products while Charkieh Plastics and Packing Co. Ltd manufactures plastic products. Currently, however, most of the companies recruit very few staff from the community, because of the low levels of education there. Even when they do employ community residents, it is on a casual worker basis.



*Picture 28: A printing press*



*Picture 29: A beauty shop*

Finally it is important to note the importance to the area of such self-employed trades as barbers, tailors, shoemakers, etc. These trades employ two assistants on average, and given the right business coaching, could expand to employ more people from the community, while training new entrepreneurs.

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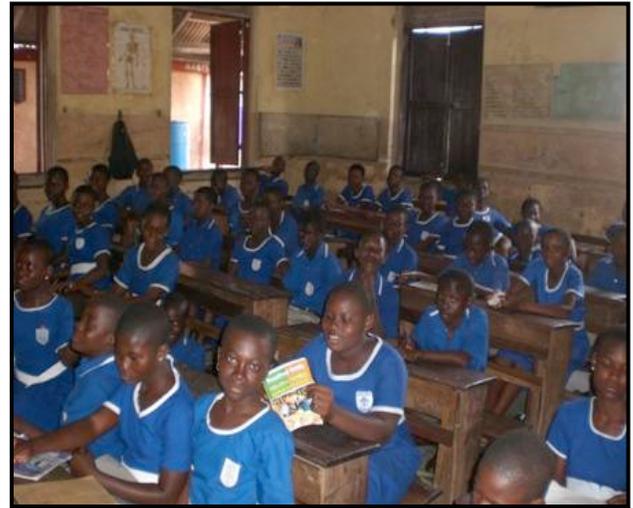
<sup>19</sup> OACADA is currently working to help establish a bank that can address the challenges of entrepreneurs living within the community.

## 2.1.7: Education and Other Infrastructure

Although Ga Mashie boasts of many nurseries and 1<sup>st</sup> cycle (primary) schools, the number of educational institutions set up to serve the community is not enough, given the population estimate. Most if not all of the existing educational centres are in deplorable state and lack facilities to support the numbers of students.<sup>20</sup> Sacred Heart Technical Institute is the only 2<sup>nd</sup>-cycle institution in the area.



*Picture 42: Nursery-aged children playing on the street*



*Picture 43: JHS pupils in a classroom*

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<sup>20</sup> Most Ga Mashie schools have been on the shift system, which has not benefitted the students, given the restricted number of hours spent in school and the inability to incorporate school sporting or any other activities into the school day. However, the current Mayor of Accra, the Honorable Alfred Vanderpuije, has committed the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA), where he serves as CEO, to having all so-called shift students moved into full-day school programs for the 2010-2011 academic year. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Accra has partnered in this effort with the AMA and Mayor Vanderpuye and is finishing construction on three 18-classroom blocks across the city, to dramatically reduce the number of pupils caught up in the shift system.



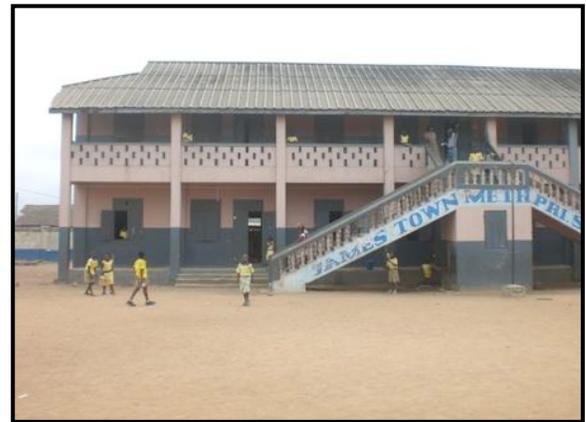
*Picture 44: Compound of Sacred Heart Technical Institute*



*Picture 45: Schoolchildren playing*



*Picture 46: A JHS Compound*



*Picture 47: James Town Methodist JHS*



*Picture 48: The Royal School library*



*Picture 49: Children walking home from school*

### *Police station*

James Town District Headquarters serves James Town and Ussher Town. It is the main police station for the community. The station includes apartments for the policemen and their family.

### *Courts*

The two courts in Ga Mashie are the Mantse Agbonaa Court, which deals with motor vehicle cases, and the City Engineers Court, or District Court, which deals with civil cases.

## 2.2: Prospects for Tourism Promotion

Ga Mashie abounds in many historical buildings which date back to the pre-colonial and colonial eras. These buildings represent moments of historical significance not only for the local community, but Ghana and the world, leading UNESCO to list James and Ussher Forts as World Heritage Sites. The identification of 150 buildings deemed to be of historical importance, puts Ga Mashie in a unique position as a rich potential tourism destination in Ghana. A task force responsible for ‘The Old Accra Integrated Urban Development and Conservation Framework’ has thus put forward plans to preserve and develop these historical buildings.<sup>21</sup>

### 2.2.1: Major Landmarks

#### *Ussher Fort*

This fort was originally a Dutch post built in 1647. After it was enlarged in 1652, the name was changed to Fort Crevecoeur, but it regained its original name in 1668. The fort changed hands between the British and the Dutch, during the struggle for colonial influence. During the later years of colonial rule, it served as a prison where many notable Ghanaians, including independence hero and first president Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, served jail sentences. It continued to serve as a prison until it was released to the Ghana Museums and Monuments Board (GMMB) in 1994.

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<sup>21</sup>.Draft prepared by Accra Metropolitan Assembly, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development with support from UNESCO Ghana. Available at UNESCO Ghana office

Given the huge potential of the building for the development of cultural and heritage tourism, a restoration and rehabilitation project was initiated, aimed at converting the bastion and the former police station into a museum, as a first phase in the fort’s rehabilitation. The part of the fort that had served as prison remains in deplorable state, with the remaining parts of the fort left in a merely dilapidated condition.



*Picture 58: Frontage of Ussher Fort*



*Picture 59: Renovated section of Ussher Fort*

### *James Fort*

James Fort is located in the James Town part of Ga Mashie. It was built and used by the British for various purposes until it became a prison after Ghana’s independence. It was released to the GMMB in 2007 to be used a national museum as part of the ‘Joseph Project.’<sup>22</sup>

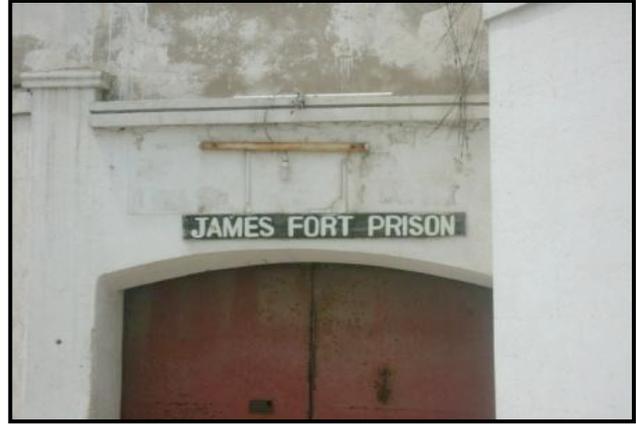
Currently, the fort is in an abandoned and vulnerable state, as the proposed museum has not materialized and little or no other rehabilitation or restoration work has yet taken place

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<sup>22</sup> The “Joseph Project” is fashioned on the biblical story of Joseph, the son of Jacob who, having been sold into slavery by his brothers, became the Prime Minister of Egypt, from where he eventually reconciled with his brothers and reunited with his family, whom he saved from hunger. The “Joseph Project,” initiated by the Ministry of Tourism, is aimed at facilitating the spiritual return of the more than 30 million Africans in the Diaspora to Ghana.



*Picture 60: Courtyard of James Fort*



*Picture 61: Entry Point to James Fort*

### *Accra Lighthouse*

The Accra Lighthouse as it is popularly called, is 93 feet (28 meters) high, with a visibility of 16 nautical miles (30 km). This lighthouse, originally called the Jamesfort Light, was built by the British at James Fort in 1871. It is currently being managed by the Ghana Ports and Harbors Authority (GPHA).



*Picture 62: Lighthouse from roadside*



*Picture 63: View of lighthouse from the beach*

### 2.2.2: Other Landmarks

Many buildings and houses of equal historical importance exist in Ga Mashie. Unfortunately, most of these buildings are in terrible physical and structural condition. The architecture of most of these buildings reflects the history of the local people. Some of the most notable houses include Franklin House, Salaga Market, London Market Adawso House and Brazil House. This last has seen a thorough rehabilitation, with financial assistance from the Brazilian Government, in collaboration with UNESCO. A similar intervention on behalf of the many

other buildings scattered around the community will go a long way toward promoting tourism and development in Ga mashie.



*Picture 64: Methodist Church*



*Picture 65: Sub-Chiefs' Palace*



*Picture 66: Renovated Brazil House*

The coastline in Ga Mashie is one area with lots of vacant land. Large parts of the area, except for the old harbor section, which is currently used as a fishing village, lie vacant. Here one can find all types of fishing vessels/canoes, as well as squatter structures occupied mainly by migrant fishermen, who have moved to the area, at least temporarily, from neighboring coastal communities.



*Picture 67: Vacant section of beachfront*



*Picture 68: Vacant land near the old slaughterhouse*



*Picture 69: Tent at the beach*



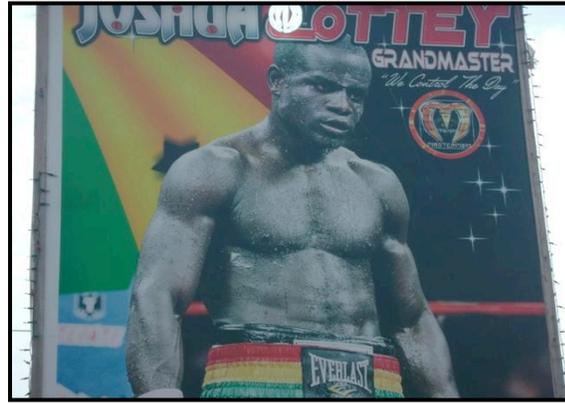
*Picture 70: Children playing at the beach*

### *Boxing*

The natives of Ga Mashie are naturally endowed with the acumen, skills and strength for boxing. Indeed, the area is well-known and recognized as the citadel of boxing in Ghana. It has produced many world champions, including the famous Azumah Nelson, undoubtedly Africa's greatest boxer. In Ga Mashie, boxing is an important economic activity for male youths in particular, many of whom dream of becoming professionals one day. A number of boxing gyms are scattered throughout the community; some of the most popular include Ato Quarshie, Will Power and Panix Boxing Gyms.



Picture 71: Photo with a local boxing champion



Picture 72: Signboard of Joshua Clottey

### *Korle Lagoon*

The Korle Lagoon, historically an important socio-economic asset of the Gas, now receives virtually all the run-off from the entire city of Accra and, as a result, is heavily polluted. In particular, a lot of material carried into the lagoon during periodic floods is deposited and remains there. Only a short distance from the sea, the lagoon could be a valuable environmental resource, if its water quality could be improved.



Picture 73: Mangroves in Korle Lagoon



Picture 74: Korle Lagoon engulfed with waste



*Picture 75: Lagoon entering into the Atlantic Ocean*

### 2.2.3: Hallmark Events

#### *Homowo Festival*

Homowo is a festival celebrated by the Ga people from the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. The festival is highlighted at varying times by different quarters of the Ga tribe. Homowo recounts the migration of the Gas and reveals their agricultural success in their new settlement. According to Ga oral tradition, a severe famine broke out among the people during their migration to present-day Accra. They were inspired by the famine to embark on massive food production exercises, which eventually yielded bumper harvests. Their hunger ended, and with great joy they "hooted at hunger," which is the meaning of the expression, "Homowo."

### 2.3: Major Development Stakeholders at Ga Mashie

#### *Ga Mashie Development Agency (GAMADA)*

GAMADA is a government-owned non-governmental organisation formed to act as the main agency responsible for raising awareness, sensitizing the community and building capacity for the development of Ga Mashie. It was borne out of the Old Accra Framework, which was compiled in 1999 and approved by the Government of Ghana in 2000. GAMADA currently has its offices in Ga Mashie, in a building commissioned in November 2007.

### *UNESCO (Ghana Office)*

The United Nations Education Social, Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) has been one of the most active organisations in Ga Mashie. In February 2000, the Government of Ghana approved the 'Old Accra Integrated Urban Development and Conservation Framework' as a national project and requested UNESCO's support in implementing this major undertaking. Since then, UNESCO has played an integral part in the efforts at redeveloping Ga Mashie providing technical and financial assistance at different times.

### *Old Accra Conservation and Development Association (OACADA)*

OACADA is another non-governmental organization (NGO), established in 1999. OACADA comprises concerned urban elite, mainly of Ga origin, and has been directly involved in raising awareness and supporting advocacy activities among the inhabitants and the communities, in close cooperation with community-based associations. OACADA has been working with UNESCO to inventory the heritage sites in the Ga area. OACADA sees tourism development as the activity that can elevate the Ga Mashie community, given its multiplier effects.

### *Housing the Masses (HM)*

Housing the Masses (HM) started operations in Accra in August 2009. It is an inclusive low-income, development-oriented non-governmental organization. HM has worked with both national and local governments, communities, other NGOs and international organizations, including the UNDP and the UN-Habitat, on policy reforms, project development and implementation, community facilities and research work. According to the Executive Director of HM, Ellen Oteng Nsiah the NGO was created to fill the gap of professional technical assistance provision to slum and low-income communities in Ghana.

Currently, HM has completed a feasibility study on developing a low income housing scheme for the Ga Mashie community. The second phase of the project which is looking at the housing designs is on-going. Housing the Masses is also undertaking a housing development project in Yendi, a community in the Northern region of Ghana.

### *CHF International*

CHF International is an international development and humanitarian aid organization that operates in approximately 30 countries per year. The non-profit organization was founded in 1952 as the Cooperative Housing Foundation and provided affordable housing for low-income families in rural and urban America. CHF began working abroad in the 1960s, and today the organization implements a variety of programs in the areas of global health, economic development, housing and infrastructure, emergency response, democracy and governance.

In Ghana, CHF International is working with six local organizations to improve access to credit and to improve housing conditions for residents of nine targeted slums in Accra and Sekondi-Takoradi. CHF International has been working in collaboration with local institutions, NGOs and CBOs. For example, CHF has partnered with HFC Bank and Housing the Masses, to redevelop affordable low-income housing for people in Ga Mashie. This project, which will begin in Ussher Town, is in an advanced stage of implementation, as background studies have been conducted regarding the housing needs of the people.

## 2.4: Limitations

In the conduct of this research, the team faced several limitations, the most inhibiting of which was gaining access to the community, which caused undue delay to the conduct of fieldwork in Ga Mashie. Obtaining the necessary permissions to tour the community and to take photographs of infrastructure and activities was extremely difficult. The researchers were threatened on a number of occasions by some irate youth, who suspected us of being journalists taking photographs of their community, ostensibly to publish in the newspapers and other media.

Moreso, gaining access to private houses, for the purpose of conducting interviews and taking photographs, was also delayed, as household heads explained that they were not eager to provide information because they had already been involved in similar research and had not benefited from it in any way. To reassure them, and to overcome homeowners' reluctance to speak with the research team, letters were prepared and addressed to selected households. GAMADA Project Director Mr. Tagoe was very helpful, in this regard. However, the Study Team would advise future researchers and/or practitioners in Ga Mashie or any other Accra neighborhood to take care of this, with the support also of the Accra Metropolitan Assembly, prior to their arrival in the field.

A further inhibiting factor was the lack of access early on in the course of our fieldwork to such useful instruments as GPS and cameras, for use in the community.

### III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 3.1 Conclusion

With its dense population, Ga Mashie historically has yielded one of the highest vote counts in the country. This political value has ensured that the community has been showered, from time to time, with some of the best road infrastructure in the city. However, Ga Mashie's open spaces are either under- or over-utilized, and many houses are single-floor only, with little attention paid to land economy. Living on the street is a common practice in Ga Mashie; streets can also be blocked for social functions such as trading (day and night), bathing, engagements/weddings, funerals and outdoorings of babies, thus making access and parking difficult. In the course of this study, MCI-UGL researchers witnessed many such events. It is evident that in order to upgrade Ga Mashie, significant effort needs to be invested in other equally important areas, such as housing, water and sanitation infrastructure, and the creation of enabling conditions for tourism and other economic activities. In this light, the research team puts forward herewith a set of recommendations that present various levels of challenges, including, but not limited to, the restructuring, redesign and re-engineering of Ga Mashie.

#### 3.2 General Recommendations

Based on its research findings, the MCI-UGL study team wishes to propose a number of recommendations concerning possible improvements to the historic and important downtown neighborhood of Ga Mashie.

##### 3.2.1: Housing Redevelopment

- To be successful, strategic alliances should be made with the banking sector to finance the housing projects. In addition, additional funding should be made available to institutions such as GAMADA, to fund capacity-building efforts in construction. This will help position Ga Mashie to supply the skilled labor for the housing redevelopment and will, in the long run, help reduce the total costs of redevelopment.
- Given the high demand for housing in the area, design efforts should focus on introducing well-engineered multi-storey housing structures that can address the high demand while also preserving the character and custom of the houses in the community.

### 3.2.2: Infrastructure Development:

- To complement the good road network, open gutters need to be replaced with closed gutters, and in some areas of the community, new gutters need to be built. The budget allocation for drainage should be increased and complemented by corporate donations from companies based in the community.
- Ga Mashie's open spaces are currently either under- or over- utilized. Open spaces add to the beauty of a place and provide grounds for social functions. Areas along the coast and around the lagoons are important open spaces that should be developed both as recreational and scenic sites. Planning should begin for their restoration and thoughtful development along these lines. Illegal structures built on open spaces could be pulled down, in accordance with international law and convention regarding the human rights and proper notice due to slum and shack dwellers, and these spaces might be restored, including through a tree-planting campaign, given that the community is bare and without trees. Any form of redevelopment in Ga Mashie should be accompanied by efforts to plant trees throughout the community, which can provide a lasting legacy of shade, aesthetic beauty and environmental protection for years to come. Importantly, open spaces should be planned in consultation with community members, especially considering its importance in the community.

### 3.2.3: Sanitation and Public Health

- The sanitation challenges in Ga Mashie need to be addressed to enhance the health of community dwellers. There are heaps of both solid and liquid wastes almost everywhere in the community that pose dangers to the health of the people. The Waste Management Department needs to fulfill its duties diligently, with proper monitoring and evaluation schemes on monthly basis. There is also the need for more and better outfitted health facilities in Ga Mashie, to address the health needs of the growing population.

### 3.2.4: Tourism Promotion

- Tourism has been identified as the main activity that can help push forward the redevelopment of Ga Mashie due to the numerous benefits it is expected to bring to the local economy. The potential for a vibrant tourism centre at Ga Mashie is enormous, considering all the attractions in the area. Ga Mashie has the potential to develop its beach front, ancient markets (London and Salaga markets), museums and boxing gyms. However, these projects are currently not very attractive, due to low quality standards and control.
- The Accra Metropolitan Assembly, in consultation with the Ministry of Tourism, should invest in these projects, both to maximize their use and to generate income for the community that can uplift the living standards of the people of Ga Mashie. For example, the beachfront and the demolished slaughterhouse area should be developed as tourist spots.

- Several abandoned commercial sites are of historical interest, such as John Holt Bartholomew. The question of these sites' ownership needs to be addressed, as some are plagued with expired leases, and ownership has therefore reverted to families. The families should be encouraged to consider releasing these properties to investors, who would, as part of any contract, commit to helping to revitalize the commercial life of Ga Mashie. In this respect, GAMADA and other identifiable bodies in Ga Mashie could create communication links with wealthy Ga Mashie natives, both locally and in the diaspora, and promote discussions with some businessmen and -women who might be interested in rehabilitating some of these abandoned buildings, involving the families concerned. This would ensure that tourism and its ancillary activities are managed by people in the community itself. Owners of historic buildings should be advised as to the benefits of renovating their facilities to serve touristic purposes.
- The Sub-chiefs' palaces also need to be refurbished, while maintaining the original architectural designs so as to maintain their cultural heritage.

### 3.2.5: Economic Activities

- The major economic activity in Ga Mashie is small-scale fishing and petty trading in the informal sector. Though the majority of people rely on fishing for their livelihoods, it is mainly at the subsistence level. Financing remains a critical missing component to strengthening and expanding commercial activities in the neighborhood. Currently, entrepreneurs lack the necessary credit histories and the reliably bankable ventures that would enable them to attract seed funding. We would encourage would-be entrepreneurs and small-to-medium-scale business developers to form co-operatives capable of attracting banking facilities and support from micro-finance institutions. The AMA should promote financial literacy and consumer protection initiatives, by collaborating with known development partners such as GTZ, which offers support for capacity-building in the economic arena.
- As a final recommendation, the study team appeals to government to fast-track the establishment of the Accra Fishing Harbour Construction, which will create jobs for the teeming numbers of youth and also open the area for development, inasmuch as it will improve and enhance the fishing industry and its role in the community. Dredging and de-silting of the Korle Lagoon should also be made a government priority. The lagoon used to be a source of income and employment for fishermen who hailed from Ga Mashie. The dredging is expected to improve the ecological and environmental aspects of the lagoon, and to offer substantial improvement to the city's drainage and flooding problems, by way of ensuring the smooth flow of floodwater to the sea. The rehabilitation works on the Salaga or Sraha Market should be given the necessary priority; traders using the temporary stalls and sheds complain that they are not comfortable with their current conditions, as the place lacks even such basic

infrastructure as toilets and washrooms. The newly constructed market should therefore provide such facilities, as well as parking spaces to make shopping there more convenient for wholesale and retail customers alike.

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## APPENDICES

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### A. Quick Facts About Kenkey Factories In Ga Mashie

- There are usually 2-6 workers
- Production is done throughout the week, with no off days
- About 600-800 balls are produced in a day at each kenkey factory
- Some of the factories work on a rotational basis
- Patronage is highly local and for subsistence consumption
- Firewood is the major source of energy
- Cooking is done very early in the morning
- The kenkey attracts the patronage of other foodstuffs, such as fried fish

B. Royal Academy (Primary & Junior High School), Adedemkpo 1 Primary and Adedemkpo 2 Primary

Stephen Adu-Gyamfi - Head Master (Royal Academy & Adedemkpo 1 Primary)

- Established in 1952
- The schools have been running on a shift system
- The school is government-sponsored, so tuition is free
- There are 240 students enrolled, with about 45% boys, 55% girls
- 70% of the entire student population comes from the Ga Mashie area, the remaining 30% comes from such communities as Chokor, Kaneshie and Dansoman.
- The school is in a single two-storey building, which houses:
  - 12 classrooms
  - Two office spaces for the headmasters
- The school has no library, so texts and other books are stored in boxes
- The school's teachers do not live in the area, so they are unfamiliar with students' activities after school hours.

### C. Sacred Heart Technical Institute (Senior High School)

#### Vincent Tunyo - Vice Principal

- Established in November 1980, at the Sacred Heart Catholic church in Arena, Accra-Central.
- School was relocated to Ga Mashie
- It charges GH¢ 35 per term, for 3 terms, for a total of GH¢ 105 approximately USD 74.13
- School has close to 650 students, including 220 males & 426 females
- 15% of the entire student population comes from Ga Mashie<sup>23</sup>
- Students have an option to study in such subjects as:
  - Cosmetology
  - Carpentry and Joinery
  - Fashion Design
  - Business Studies (Accounting or Secretarial )
  - Catering
- The school has two 3-storey buildings which house:
  - 15 classrooms,
  - 1 science laboratory
  - 1 carpentry workshop
  - Separate rooms for catering and cosmetology practicum workshops
  - A computer room with 46 computers, of which 32 are functioning.

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<sup>23</sup> Very often, female students from the community withdraw to have kids and never come back. According to the vice-principal, members of the community have traditionally taken more pride in starting families at an early age than in receiving a formal education. This is an attitude that the AMA, the Government of Ghana and many international agencies have been working to change.