



Dora Bought Land She Could Not Yet Build On: She Was Not Buying a House. She Was Buying Time

For many people, buying land is associated with an immediate plan. Buy land, build a house and move in. For Dora, the plan was different. She was thirty eight and had spent several years working outside Nigeria. She had lived in London for almost eight years and had watched property prices rise around her while the idea of owning something back home remained on her mind. Every Christmas, she would tell herself that the following year would be different. Then school fees came, family emergencies came, rent increased and travel became expensive. The plan kept moving until one conversation changed how she thought about property ownership.

The Land Banking Question

Dora had been saving consistently for years. She wanted to return to Nigeria eventually, but she knew she was not ready to build a house. Buying a completed property was expensive, while building immediately was unrealistic. Keeping all her money in cash also created another concern because the value of money can change as prices and exchange rates move. Dora therefore began exploring a different idea. What if she bought land first and allowed the construction decision to come later?

She considered several options. She could continue saving until she could afford to build, purchase a completed property immediately, use her savings to establish a business in Nigeria, or secure a piece of land and develop it when her circumstances allowed. Dora eventually purchased a plot in a developing area. She did not build immediately, and that was the point. She wanted to secure the land while she still had the ability to buy it rather than waiting until she was completely ready to construct a building

Buying Time Instead of Chasing Speed

Dora's strategy was based on patience. For her, land banking was not about rushing to build. It was about securing an asset that could form part of her long term plans. However, she understood that buying land was not simply about finding a cheap plot. She had to investigate the title,

confirm ownership, understand the planning status and verify whether the land was affected by government acquisition or planning restrictions. She also had to understand the terms of the transaction before paying because the cheapest land was not necessarily the safest land. Her experience taught her that property decisions should be based on more than location and price. A person can find a seemingly attractive piece of land and still face problems later if the ownership structure is unclear, the documentation is incomplete or the property has restrictions that were not disclosed at the point of purchase. This made due diligence one of the most important parts of her decision.

The Problem With Buying What You Cannot Verify

Across Nigeria, property buyers regularly face concerns around documentation, ownership disputes, fraudulent transactions and multiple claims over the same property. That is why land investment requires more than excitement about a location. It requires due diligence and patience. A buyer needs to know who owns the property, what documentation exists, whether the documentation can be verified and whether the proposed use of the land is consistent with planning and regulatory requirements.

Dora learned this before making her purchase. She also learned another important lesson. Land is not automatically a good investment simply because it is land. Its location, title, accessibility, development potential, demand, infrastructure and purchase price can all affect its future prospects. What looks like an affordable opportunity today may become a difficult investment if the underlying property cannot be properly verified or if the area does not develop as expected.

From Abuja to the World

Dora's experience is not unique to Nigeria. Across the world, people use property as part of long term financial planning, but the way people participate in real estate is changing. Some buy entire properties, some invest through real estate funds, some participate in fractional ownership, while others buy land and hold it for future development. Technology has also made it possible for people living outside their home countries to explore property opportunities remotely, although remote investors still need reliable verification and professional due diligence.

This is part of the wider conversation around democratizing real estate. The question is no longer simply who can afford an entire building. It is also about what structures can allow more people to participate responsibly in property ownership. As new investment models emerge, fractional ownership is creating conversations around how people can gain exposure to real estate without purchasing an entire property outright.

The Core Principles of Buying Land

- *Verify Before Paying:* Confirm ownership, title and relevant documentation before committing money.

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- *Think Long Term:* Land can require patience and may not immediately generate income.
 - *Understand the Location:* Infrastructure, accessibility, development and demand can affect property prospects.
 - *Budget Beyond the Purchase Price:* Legal fees, documentation, surveys, taxes and development costs can add to the total expense.
 - *Have a Clear Purpose:* Know whether the land is being purchased for development, resale, long term holding, family use or another objective.

Dora eventually returned to Nigeria. The land she bought years earlier was still there. She had not rushed to build and she had not purchased simply because everyone around her was buying. She had made a decision based on her own timeline, financial capacity and long term plans. For Dora, the land represented something more than a plot. It represented an option for the future, a place she could eventually develop when the time was right.

Dora's story is a reminder that property ownership does not always have to begin with a completed house. Sometimes it begins with understanding what you can afford, verifying what you are buying and having the patience to let your plans develop over time. The most important thing an investment can give you is not always immediate wealth. Sometimes, it gives you an option for the future.

DROOM 2026 is opening a wider conversation about the future of ownership, from land and property to technology, partnerships and new models of participation. Join the conversation at DROOM 2026 and explore how Africa can make real estate ownership more accessible, informed and inclusive.