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Editorial Note

It is expedient to observe that with the way the maiden issues of ARCHISEARCH published in March 2009 was well received within the academic environment far and wide, the second edition would have followed promptly. The Editorial Committee therefore acknowledges with appreciation the initiative of the Head of Architecture Department, Arc Mas'ud Abdulkarim in seeing to the actualization of this second edition. We hope that future edition will be published bi – annually.

The Editor – in – Chief is highly delighted with the range of contributions particularly from sister Institutions. More articles in this edition reflect items from primary sources which is an evidence of findings from actual research carried out by contributors.

ARCHISEARCH, a publication of the Department of Architecture, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, should go a long way in stimulating research activities by the staff of the Department and the publication of such findings.

We accept the fact that there is still room for improvement and we shall solicit for suggestions on the way forward for improvement in the subsequent edition.

Popoola, J. O. Ph.D (Nottingham)
Editor – in – Chief.

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An Assessment of the Changing Phases of Minna City-Center.

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Abstract

This study seeks to examine the changes of Minna city centre with the view to developing a structured guideline and principles for the development and management of city centre. Secondary data for this study was based on the past records from the government agencies and related literatures, while the primary data were collected via the use of questionnaire from the residents and occupiers of space for other functions rather than residential purposes at the Central Business District (CBD) of Minna and the observation of phenomenon in urban development. The study however revealed the fact that there have been changes in the phase of the core area of the city of Minna, which has resulted in the elimination of open spaces and conversion of buildings from residential to commercial. However, the dual uses of building are more predominant and have made the property highly competitive at the CBD; this is due to the economic structure of the central area. The shortcoming in the capacity for the management however allays the truth that the government does not possess any principles or guideline in managing and controlling the development of the city centre. The study therefore agreed on the principles and guideline for managing the development of Minna city centre which have in focus among other things the understanding of the necessity of developing vision on how the city centre must look like; targeting an urban area with spaces for pedestrian, street lighting, well landscape environment, good streetscape design.

Keywords: central area, city-centre, sustainable, planning, urban

1. Introduction

The quest for distinct and special places for the residents of any country transcends the need for industrial layout areas or residential neighbourhoods. The need for legally designated and accessible areas where people meet, socialize and manage the affairs of the entire city cannot be overemphasized. This kind of area, serves the purpose of social and economic activities of the city, which is better known as the "central area"; a place of overriding interest and importance if compared to other places in the city with different activities. In view of this, Walker (2006) gave the definition of city centre as the traditional retail heart of an urban area, which provides a broad range of shops and other

facilities to fulfil a definite function, as a focus both for the community and public transport. The city or civic centre is a focal image that integrates aesthetically pleasing and functional public experience by encompassing the best of the social, economic and physical features of the people residing in the city or outside.

Nigeria cities shear similar phenomenon in most States of the Federation. The problems facing the urban areas are numerous; ranging from the lack of effective urban development policy, poor planning and poor management of the cities. These problems are traceable to lack of principles and guidelines for urban design and city centre development. The urban development policy given by the government of the Country in 2006 is considered too generalized and cannot address the multifaceted urban issues and

problems of growing cities. Shortcomings in regards to the non-involvement and participation of the people at the grass root in the development of the policies have been recorded. Besides, there are problems of non availability of the tools for city planning, such as master plan, structural plan, developmental plan and street guide maps. The current state of available tools is out dated and cannot be used efficiently for the purposes of city planning. The refusal of government lead to provide adequate planning tools has led to weak political and financial commitments as well as haphazard implementation. This has also incapacitated statutory agencies implementing guidelines and procedures for the expected service delivery.

Minna, a metropolitan urban area of Niger State is the administrative headquarters of the State. Its planning problems ranges from lack of laid down principles and guidelines for the development of the city centre. As such, poor strategies have been employed in the coordination and management of the city core; and poor documentation of land related issues at central business district of the city. However, this paper is aimed at examining the changes of Minna City Centre with the view to suggest guidelines and principles for the development and management of the city centre. The goal is to encourage a place for both social and economic viability that include among others functional centres for working, shopping, living and recreating. The objectives include: identifying the extent limit of coverage of the city centre at different periods of time, assessing the land use pattern and the characteristics of the development at the city centre and examining the existing capacity for the management of the city centre.

2 The Study Area

Minna is the administrative headquarters of Niger State. The State shares boundary with six different States of the Federation namely; Kebbi, Zamfara, Kaduna, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja, Kogi and Kwara. At the western axis, it shares boundary with Republic of Benin; a neighbouring country. The total expanse of

land coverage in Minna lies between the latitude $9^{\circ}92'$ - $9^{\circ}100'$ North and longitude $6^{\circ}30'$ - $6^{\circ}35'$ East. This area spans from Tundun- Fulani in the Northwest to Chanchaga in the South. In distance to other major towns and cities: it is about 135km away from the Federal Capital Territory, 86km to Bida, 110km away from Suleja and about 150 km to Kotangora. The city Minna derived its name as a result of the traditional festival performed by the indigenous dwellers the Gwari, meaning spread Fire. Minna now serves as the administrative headquarters for the 25 Local Governments Councils in the State.

The history of the city is traceable to the advent of locomotive railway transportation system in Nigeria in the late 18th Century. This triggered development across some hinterlands and rural settlements. Minna town came into lime light and got expanded in 1905 when a judiciary system of governance (appointing a chief judge "Alkali") was inaugurated for the growing settlement. The town was further face lifted with the construction of prison. Socio-economic and political strengths resulted in movement of the indigenous settlers from the uphill of Paid hill (along Maitunbi road) to its present location. In 1924, Minna was made a district headquarters by the colonial administration and this caused the town to experience more development. The status of the town was further enhanced in 1957 when the colonial administrator created Minna emirate with an emir as its traditional head. Sixteen years after the Nigeria independence, Minna became the state capital and administrative headquarters of the newly created Niger State through the government declaration on Local Government Reformed Act.

The expansion of Minna as a State Capital was more enhanced when the seat of Federal Government moved from Lagos to Abuja in 1992. This proximity to the Federal Capital; changed the landscape of the town and increased the influx of people into the town. Housing development and cost got increased, spreading the city to suburban areas and ultimately increased the viability of commercial activities at the city centre.

The Master Plan of the Minna (1979-2000) captured its previous area covered by the city centre and the likely spread. It is observed that the city centre is bounded by Kuta Road at the northern axis; by Bosso Road on the West and by River Suka in the south-eastern axis. This river runs parallel to Abdul Street behind the present central market. Despite the fact that the core still act as the focal point for the metropolitan area, the perception is that similar attributes have diffused outside the traditional city centre to some other parts of the city.

3 Literature Review

The growth of the world population since the turn of the 19th Century and particularly after the World War II has been unparalleled in the history of the world (Obateru, 2005). The increase in population has indirectly changed the phases of the urban settlements; most semi urban areas have turned to full urban towns and cities with a competition in the economic activities. With regards to the rate of growth of cities population in most developing countries, UN-Habitat (2008/ 2009) reported that half of the world populations are already living in the cities and by the middle of the century most of the regions in the developing countries will predominately turn urban. Basic to every population shift is the desire to satisfy certain felt needs. Adekoya (1981) gave the reasons for the shift in population into the urban viz: social choice and the economic theories of movement. These theories are of the opinion that the choice made by anyone to live very close to the urban city centre is based on the socio-economic capacity and the socio-psychological value of better livelihood in the cities. For instance, the best social facilities (schools) in rural areas cannot match substandard ones in the cities.

What then defines the characteristics of a city? Foremost, the definition can be viewed from two different viewpoints. From the economic perspective, the city is a dynamic system of interrelated and interdependent market, characterized by great density and specialization of economic actors with certain institutional conditions that influence decision making. This

kind of market serves and is served by large numbers of persons and firms located in relatively close proximity. At the same time they provide households and firms with contacts and flow of information. From the geographers view, city is a place with sufficient size of land and with concentration of people that perform their various activities. The size and character of the city is therefore based on the population and the functional purposes.

Considering the contextual basis for formation and development of city centres; models of a polarized development is best suitable for the description of the changing phases of most of the world's cities. This model emerged based on the inability of the spatial equilibrium and regional development to vividly explain the persistent existence of undeveloped localities within both advanced and developing countries. The basis of this theory established the fact that both economic and social development has been historically characterized by increased geographical concentration. The three major theories attributed to this model include the cumulative causation theory; the core-periphery theory and growth poles and growth centres theory. The main aim of these models therefore is to demonstrate how and why regional imbalances in development occur and how eventually the regions are spatially integrated over time (Omuta and Onokerhoraye 1986).

The town centre as one of the three distinct functional parts of towns is the place where the commercial and administrative life of the town travails, in their highest and most complicated form. It is the area where the most important central services supplied by the town are made available. This view was supported by Walker (1996) on the agreements that the city centre is the same as town centre and is traditionally the retail heart of the urban area or city. It operates through a broad range of shops and is served by various public transport networks. The study conducted on Enugu by Okoye (1981) expanded further that the city centre was the same as the Central Business District (CBD). A place characterized with great amount of retail business and a place where other business and business transactions.

Onokerhoraye and Omuta (1986) described the CBD as the focus of commercial, social and civic life. Its development thereof is characterized by departmental stores, smart shops, huge office buildings, clubs, markets, banks hotels, theatres and museums. In his study on the land use structure of Ilorin CBD, Onokerhoraye (1982) noted five different major uses: commercial, residential, service industry, public uses, Roads and streets. This implies that the existence of cities and mega cities attracts large concentration of population that facilitates enormous economic scales of urban infrastructural facilities and services. At the same time it serves as centres of entertainment and the point of diffusion of innovations (Agbola and Egunjobi 1993).

Thus, the most important requirement for a city centre are geographical centrality, accessibility for vehicles, and pedestrians, ample parking space and a high measure of compactness.

The implication of the foregoing is that the concept of a safe city centre lies on the adoption of urban design principles which promise huge benefits to creating a liveable urban city environment. It is also essential to monitor its growth, coordinate the activities and rejuvenate the value the city possesses. Urban Design is the art of making places for people and a fundamental system of delivering enhanced living environments for all and sundry. However, urban design principles and skills are central to providing a high level of amenity and sustainability for development not only at city centre but extended to the entire city. It is a collaborative and multi-disciplinary process of shaping the physical setting for life in cities, towns, villages and rural areas. To enhance the subject of harmonious city, urban design approach has the capability of integrating all the policies relating to spatial regeneration. It places emphasis on improvement processes for possible sustenance measures through the adoption of framework for the development of a safe city. Additional benefits are targeted at creating a decent, safe and functional environment, that ultimately seek the satisfaction of residents (both the urban and rural) and to meet up with their physical and social needs.

The general idea of sustainability is traceable to the effects of man's quest for growth, development and alleviating global environmental crises which all have given negative impact on environmental development.

In the context of the challenges facing the city centres especially in most of the developing nations, the urban landscape has been utterly affected by man's activities especially for commercial purpose. This is such that the commercial development of the city centre is becoming difficult to manage. Quite a number of factors have been responsible for this. These include the lack of demographic data, the unavailability of guiding policy or urban design principles for each city in the developing countries, unavailability of trained personnel in the management of the city affairs, generality of the available guide for the country, non focus of the government and its agencies to enhance the values of different cities for economic, physical, social and political benefits.

Minna has experienced changes in landscape and cityscape over different periods. This is in fact evident from inception of the city as a Gbagyi traditional settlement due transportation linkages. Upgrading in the socio-economic and political status aided the rapid development of the town. It is clear that changes have occurred in the CBD of Minna that has transformed the land use from discrete residential and commercial to mostly mixed uses.

4 Methodology

The research report was based on an empirical study carried out on the city centre of Minna Metropolitan area. The data used in this research work involves both secondary and primary data on the city of Minna. The sets of secondary data used include information from the Ministry of Lands, Survey and Town Planning; Niger State Urban Development Board (NUDB); and the Master Plan report of Minna (1979 – 2000). Quick Bird imagery was downloaded from the Google Earth software package covering the city centre. Also, library materials, articles from the internet, reports from ministry and government

agencies in-charge of spatial arrangement formed the basis for literature for this work. Primary data were collected from the residence of the area under study. This includes both the residential and commercial buildings. Information in questionnaire format and personal observation were obtained from the commuters and transporters in the CBD.

5 Analysis of Data

The findings in this study are represented under various sub headings, in line with objectives set for the work.

5.1 The Physical Extent and Boundary of Old Minna City Centre

The delineation of the physical extent limit carried out on Minna city centre was extracted from the Master Plan of the city in 1979 -2000 (Fig. 1). The boundaries of the city centre were defined by areas of commercial activities such as the central market, motor Park, railway lines, access roads and spaces of residential buildings.



Figure 1: The Physical Limit of Minna City Centre, Extracted after 1979 Minna Master Plan. (Google Earth Image, 2010)

Presently, the extent covered by Minna City Centre shows that the core area has expanded rapidly, covering the areas formally dominated by residential buildings. The finding revealed the direction of flows of various activities that are present at city centre. However, Minna City Centre had been developing along the major roads surrounding the old city centre and in different directions.



Figure 2: The Extents Limit of Minna City Centre. (Google Earth Image, 2010)

5.2 Land Use Pattern and Characteristics of Development of Minna City Centre

Data collected on the land use pattern and characteristics of development of the city centre includes: the types of building, age of building, materials for building, conditions of building, the uses of these buildings and the pattern or system for circulation within the central area.

With respect to the variations of building types, the study revealed that 93% of the buildings were bungalows, 7% were storey buildings (ranging from 2 to 3 floors). On the age of the buildings at the city centre, the study shows that 4% of the buildings were less than 10years, 16% were between 11 – 20 years, 25% of the buildings were between 21 – 30years while 55% of the buildings were more than 40years old. The materials for construction were predominantly mud (8%), cement block (62%) and brick (30%). On the uses of the buildings in the city core, the survey showed that quite a number of the buildings serve dual purposes (mixed use – residential and commercial). 30% were mainly for residential uses, 20% for commercial use, while 50% of the buildings were mixed use.

For the land use pattern of the city centre, the activities were arranged with reference to the kinds of opportunity in terms of goods and services that dominated an area. The survey showed that dominant activities and services aided the character for the expansion and labeled areas of the city core area. For instance; the Old

Airport Road was dominated by electronic outlets and shops; Hospital Road was dominated by printing and publishing works, Kuta Road by building materials, Sabongari Road for household materials, Paiko Road for Banks, Ogomosho Road for machine spare parts and Kwassua- Gwari (Gwari Market) for household goods in wholesales and food items.

5.3 Circulatory Pattern of Minna City Centre

The pattern of circulation in the central area relied on the major arterial road which is the major collector road to other minor township roads. The minor roads could be described as the roads with huge traffic and great importance since they serve the residential neighbourhoods and link to the suburbs. The width of the major arterial road is 21m, inclusive of 3m of central divide or island. The double dual carriageway is 18m wide (9m apiece). Minimum and maximum widths for other access roads linking this major road are 7m-9m and 15m for double carriage ways respectively.

The survey also revealed that the expansions and development of the city vis-a-vis the availability of the economic structure of urban system are formal and informal in compositional structures. The characteristics of the areas for formal sector includes: public service areas like the Ministries of Housing, Land, Survey and Town Planning, Magistrate Court, Television Authority, UK Bello Art Theater, Prison, Local Government Secretariat, NITEL Office, Niger State Sport Commission, Nigeria Road Safety Commission Office, Magistrate Court and Railway Corporation. While the characteristics for the informal activities are places for commercial activities. These include spaces for stores of different materials like wears and shoes, chemist and pharmacy, domestic appliances, building materials and the supermarkets. Tertiary activities include spaces for offices, banks, filling stations, business centres, hotels, restaurants and guest inn.

5.4 The Existing Capacity for the Management of Minna City Centre.

In addition, this survey investigated the governance system for the management of the city core, in respect to the laid down structural frame work for carrying out their operations. This study observed that there is no clear pattern or laid down strategy for the management of the Minna city centre. The report from the agencies in-charge of urban matters [Ministry of Land Housing and Town Planning, Niger State Urban Development Board (NUDB) and Niger State Environmental Protection Agency (NISEPA)] shows that the system they employed for managing the city centre is porous and weak. This is based on the mandate for which these agencies are meant to operate on. That is development control, issuance of permit for any kinds of activities and development, cleaning of the environment by removing the wastes generated at the city centre. Thus, the efforts by these agencies have been conflicting and generalized rather than being context specific.

Conflict of responsibilities and duties is a major factor affecting the operations of the instituted agencies. The operational guidelines of these agencies did not spell out the real functions which mainly focus on the city centre management. The city beautification as mentioned in the documents that established one of the agencies lack modality and procedural etiquettes for actualization. Mostly, their activities are been determined by the political powers of the state and not the urban managers.

6 Discussion of Findings

The phase of changes in Minna central business district (CBD) has tremendously affected the physical extent of the city centre. This has resulted in the loss of the open spaces in the central area for the purpose of commercial activities. The developments in the heart of the town are majorly noticed along the major access roads, characterizing a particular road for a type of goods, services and notable activities. Also, as a result of the economic growth of the city centre of Minna, conversion of use of buildings is more prominent along the roads where these activities take place. Residential buildings are been given out in place of commercial buildings and about 50% of the buildings in the area serve

dual purposes: both residential and commercial uses. Likewise, the circulatory pattern of the city has considerable impact on the economic development of the town, causing a change in the city centre of Minna. The connectivity and accessibility from different parts of the city to the centralized area has shown that the city centre do experiences huge traffic problems at Mobil roundabout at different periods of the day, not to mention peak periods.



Plate 1: Mobil Roundabout during the Peak Period of the Day (Author, 2010)

The concept of the growth and development of Minna city centre is been characterized by the economic structure which reflected both the formal and informal composition of ideal urban system, for shopping, marketing and working. Through this principle, different places in the city centre were identified for salvaging the quest of the people's social and economic needs.

On the premise of management of the city with regards to the instituted bodies, it was observed that these institutions lack coordinating frame work of operations for service delivery in the city. The functions performed by these bodies are in conflict with one another; especially as some agencies perform the same functions within the same jurisdiction. For the fact that the agencies rely only on the government budgetary allocations for survival to discharge its statutory right, access to funding remains a problem.

6.1 The Need for the Development of Urban Design Principles and Guidelines for Minna City Centre

In addition to poor vision and concept for city centers, the unavailability of principles and guidelines intensify the major problems of city centers. Development of vision for the city centre ensures that people see the city centre as the premier of urban environment; integrating much of culture, recreation, tourism, and entertainment in order to welcome people of all diversities.

In order to prepare urban design guidelines for Minna city centre, the following tasks must be completed:

- i. The review of the Minna Master Plan to incorporate the current development and determine the implication of future development.
- ii. The delineation of the city centre should be done with the purpose of developing guidelines and plan for future activities and other development.
- iii. A thorough and comprehensive public consultation process must be undertaken.

The urban design principles to focus on the development of certain areas which include;

- i. The enhancement and conservation of the unique character of the city centre, by integrating visual experience in the city core, monitoring and coordination of development in a well-designed manner, as to promote an attractive and streetscape design, given careful consideration to individual building design, site layout and site landscape.
- ii. Planning for comfortable public spaces which include sidewalk, offer pedestrian places to walk, sit, stand and gather. Amenities such as street lighting, benches, bike rack and other accessible features are all necessary.
- iii. The introduction of landscape traffic calming features as well as attractive street

- paving materials will further enhance the good environment.
- iv. Conservation of heritage structures in the city core should be done as not to deface the original look of the structure and its character.
 - v. Maintaining the building setback will help in creating specific qualities in the city centre.
 - vi. Good streetscape design offers not only aesthetic appeal, it also functions to help pedestrian in the city centre to move safely.
 - vii. Development of design strategy that aim to retain the sense of intimacy and security of lives and properties at the city centre.

7 Recommendation and Conclusion

The city centre of Minna cannot remain stagnant and worse still without vision. To allow it grow the following recommendations will give room for the development of vibrant and lively urban environment;

- a. The review of 1979 - 2000 Minna Master Plan to incorporate the changes in the entire city.
- b. The delineation of the extent of coverage of the city centre with the purpose of monitoring the area.
- c. Preparation of development strategy plan for the city centre. The strategy should address the detail design of all the buildings in the core area.
- d. Creation of an agency that will only focus on the monitoring of the development and other activities at the city centre.

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