

Assessment of Development Control Measures in the Federal Housing Estate Uyo, Akwa Ibom State

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Abstract: Development control serves as the backbone of any nation as it shapes the development pattern and arrangement to achieve aesthetics, convenience and economy. This study assessed the development control measures in Uyo federal housing estate, Akwa Ibom State. The sampling technique employed was the purposive sampling technique. The data was gotten from residents of the federal housing estate through the administration of 319 questionnaire. The interpretation of data and the analyses were carried out through the use of tables, and the result showed that measures and strategy adopted by the planning authority in carrying out development control were very effective and significant, as it has curbed substandard and incompatible developments. Also, the study identified several factors that significantly affected the effectiveness of development control within the study area which could be addressed through collaborative efforts of government and developers. Based on findings, it is proposed that adequate mechanism should be initiated to accommodate more personnel, and appreciable funding to the planning authority for efficient and improve development control activities in the estate.

Keywords: Development Control, Federal Housing Estate, Physical Development, Planning Authority, Land Use Planning

INTRODUCTION

Experience shows that Development control exercise is undertaken to solve perceived spatial problems at every level. Ekop (1982) describes development control as an essential instrument of physical planning designed to regulate, moderate, and maintain order in land utilisation and development activities. Its main objective is to oversee and implement the execution of both private and public development proposals, ensuring that every form of physical growth aligns with the established planning principles.

In essence, development control refers to the systematic process through which land use and spatial development are directed and supervised to achieve organised and sustainable urban growth (Osinbajo, 2004). Adrill (1974) further explains that it encompasses the coordination of all human activities related to land utilisation to prevent conflicts and irregularities in spatial organisation. Consequently, development control aims to foster harmony among various land uses, prevent physical and environmental disorder, and uphold the interest and welfare of owners\occupants.

Ratcliff (2007) in his writing, explained that development control has evolved significantly over the past six decades. In past years, development was seen to be associated with industrialisation. The origin of Statutory land use planning is traced back to Britain through the Town planning Act (1908), whose principal aim was to establish an orderly and habitable environment that enhanced the morals, health, and welfare of the populace. Cullingworth (1988) observed that the

physical, moral, and social well-being of individuals could be best improved through locally guided planning efforts. Within the framework of American legal system, Chapin (1965) identified public interest as having several components; safety, welfare, convenience, health and environmental stability. However, these conflicting land-use interests can only be harmonised through effective development control mechanism.

Aims and Objectives of the study

Purpose for the study was to assess development control measures at the Federal housing estate in Uyo, Akwa Ibom state. The objectives as outlined were:

- i. To evaluate the effectiveness of development control strategies in the Federal housing estate, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.
- ii. To examine the factors affecting development control in Federal housing estate in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State

THE STUDY AREA

Uyo municipality serves dual function as the political and administrative headquarter of Akwa Ibom State, it is strategically situated within the south eastern region of Nigeria. Geographically, it lies between latitudes $5^{\circ}03'N$ to $5^{\circ}05'N$ of the Equator and longitudes of $7^{\circ}56'E$ to $8^{\circ}00'E$ of the Greenwich Meridian. The delineation of the city boundary was established under the Uyo Capital City Development Authority law, CAP 136 of 1988 (Laws of Akwa Ibom State, 2003). The law describes Uyo as covering all areas within a ten-kilometre radius from Ibom connection (Aniefiok- Ezemonye (2023). Urban growth in Uyo has been marked by rapid expansion and increasing land use conversion since its designation as the State capital. Okon (2008) observed that the city's transformation has been driven by increase in population, infrastructural development, and good governing institutions leading to evolution in land use patterns and spread of built-up areas into adjoining localities. Although this growth is promoting modernization and development, it has also created various challenges in development control. The urban area extends to incorporate adjoining parts of Itu, Uruan, Ikono, Nsit Ibom, Ibiono Ibom and Ibesikpo Asutan Local Government Areas, forming a compact metropolitan region that reflects a continuous pattern of urban development (Asuquo, 2010).

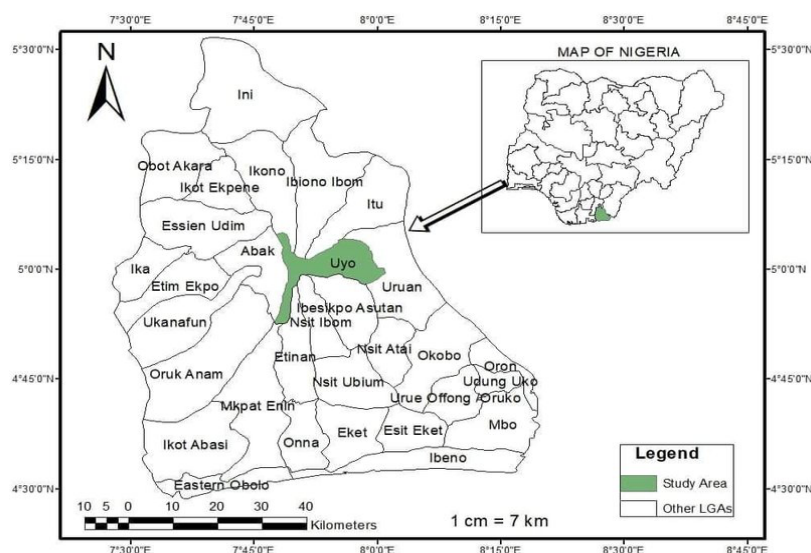


Figure 1: The study area on the Map of Akwa Ibom State

Source: Google Map, extracted from internet (2025).

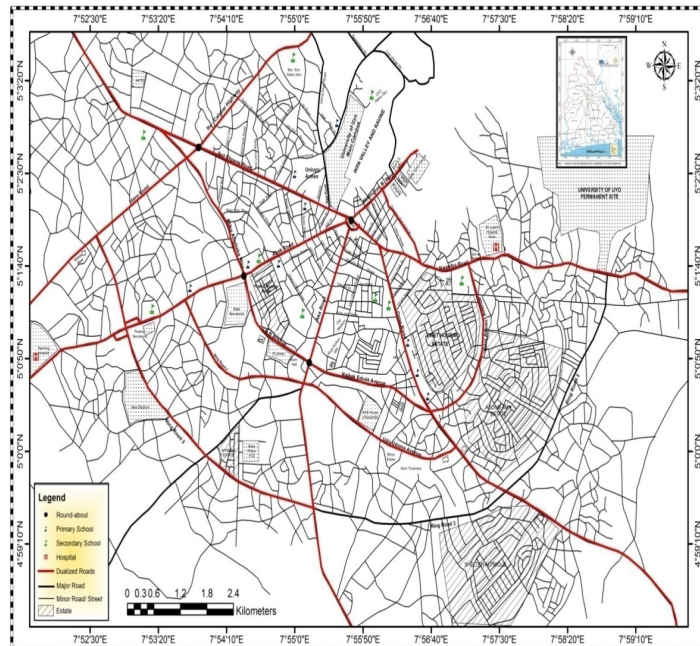


Figure 2:Map of Uyo Urban

Source: Google Map, extracted from internet (2025).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Development control, according to (Adedibu,1995) is the spatial planning instrument which generally involves the regulation, monitoring, and checking of material changes on land. Its application tends to have a negative and permissive tool for a planning development. Effective development and growth of cities depends on a well-structured system of land-use regulation that prevents conflicting and uncoordinated development activities. The authors maintained that zoning and development control are necessary tools for achieving orderly spatial organisation, environmental protection and improved living conditions. It was noted that if urban growth is left unchecked, it can lead to overcrowding, poor accessibility, leap frogging development and mis-use of land resources (Bassett et al.,1926).

Development control is seen as the process through which the utilisation of lands and buildings are regulated to promote conformity with prescribed physical planning regulations, aimed at achieving a functionally efficient development characterised by environmental safety, user comfort, and a high level of aesthetic (Ardill,1974).

According to Adedeye (2010), development control serves as a means through which planning authorities exercise power over the use and development of land, ensuring that physical development conforms to approved planning standards and regulations. Keeble (1969) defined development control as the regulation of the detailed aspects of physical development for which the development plan cannot provide precise guidance, in order to ensure compliance with established specifications and standards.

Most developing nations in the World witnessed an inadequate articulation of strategies for efficient land use planning and management. This result in a disorderly pattern of land-use activities within the cities, despite the existing policy on physical planning for respective cities (UN-HABITAT, 2008) .Unprecedented speed of urbanisation triggers most urban ataxia witnessed in both new and old cites. The weakness of the development control exercise in cities due to several challenges leads to poor infrastructure supply, outbreak of epidemics, poor accessibility and incompatibility of land uses amongst others (Owei, Obinna, Ede, 2010). Town Planning according to Town Planners Registration Council of Nigeria decree, is to direct and

control the citing of buildings and other structures on land as well as provide other needed land uses (FRN, 1992).

Cities like Lagos, Kaduna and others have over the years undergone rapid physical transformation, in terms of infrastructure provision, courtesy of the early consciousness in the implementation of Town and Country planning laws resulting in the increase of town planning authorities in major cities.

According to (Agbola, 2011), Town Planning control over the development of land is undertaken under two headings: the first is the making of a land development plan which shows the ultimate shapes and usages of the designated areas. The second is the enforcement of such perceived layout of development as contained in the land development plan. The form and structure of contemporary urban settlement creates way to dynamic changes in the physical environment whereby if planning intervention is neglected can result in haphazard and chaotic scene. One of the ways to achieving a resilient urban settlement's goal is by providing efficient development control mechanism.

Kio- Lawson (2016) examines the effectiveness of urban planning regulations in Nigerian cities, specifically in the Niger Delta region. He stated different problems such as poor funding, lack of enforcement mechanisms, political influence and corruption amongst planning officers as significant barrier to the effectiveness of development control.

According to the Federal Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (2006) and Akogun (2011), the competing demands for land necessitate robust planning and regulatory frameworks to ensure the establishment of functional, efficient and harmonious environment. Understanding the significance of development control, leads to residential property owners being penalised on cutting corners to embark on illegal developments. According to Kauko (2003), Emoh (2011), and Oni (2008), estate surveyors and valuers consider a range of attributes like accessibility, neighbourhood characteristics, public services, tax rates, density, specific negative externalities and the property's identification as the basic measures in property valuation.

One of the Cardinal programmes of the present Federal Government is to provide decent accommodations for interested citizens on owner/occupier basis at affordable cost. In pursuance of this policy, the federal government provided 2,000 housing units per each State and Abuja. It is part of the policy to make these estates models in modern planning for housing as well as in environmental sanitation.

The Federal Ministry of Works and Housing is vested with the responsibility of providing sustainable and affordable housing delivery to Nigerians.

Federal Housing Estates in Akwa Ibom State are in Manta - Abak, Iboko-Uyo, Mkpok- Eket, Ikot Abasi-Etinan, Ikot Udo Obobo/Okoyo-Ukanafun, IbiakuNtokOkpo-Ikono, Eyo Abasi/Idua-Oron, Ikot Etetuk-Ikot Abasi and Ifuho-Ikot Ekpene. The main duties of the Ministry are the control and management of these estates in terms of site inspection, scouting for illegal development and approval of extension plan in case of additional structure and those plans submitted in the site and services programme or scheme, office routine includes writing and serving of contraventions, stop work order, demolition notice to erring developers and others.

Tools for Enforcing Development Control:

Building Code

The enforcement of the National Building Codes (NBC) in Uyo Federal housing estate serves as a critical step in maintaining and promoting structural stability and construction excellence in housing development. Building codes specify the safety requirement, health and sanitation standard, accessibility, energy efficiency and others. These are tools of development control commonly employed by planning Commission, Board and Local authority for structure designs, construction and maintenance in Nigeria. Strict adherence to National Building Code (NBC),

would promote sustainable housing delivery and enhances safety of developers and residents (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2006).

Zoning Regulation

Zoning application is a veritable instrument commonly used by planning authority to allocate lands within various locations to respective land uses considering the use of structure heights, floor ratio, density of population, building lines and setbacks. In Uyo, zoning policies are implemented by the Akwa Ibom State Urban Planning Authority to promote uniformity with the approved land-use plans and encourage structured urban growth (Akwa Ibom State Government, 2020). Urban areas are categorised into various land uses, but challenges such as unregulated land-use conversions and land trespass have undermined the effectiveness of zoning control in the estate. The Urban and Regional Planning Act emphasizes proper zoning which would promotes environmental aesthetics and sustainable urban development (Federal republic of Nigeria, 1992).

Sub-Division Regulations

Sub-division regulation as a vital tool for development control, guarantees efficient circulation as well as provision of adequate facilities. It is also a mechanism for strategic land reservation. According to the Federal Housing Authority guidelines, all estate layouts must include adequate road networks, drainage system, and designation of land for social amenities before plot allocation (Federal Housing Authority, n.d.).

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

Environmental Impact Analysis (EIA) as a critical tool in development control, checks to ensure that all potential projects comply with the environmental and land-use regulations (Glasson, Therivel, and Chadwick, 2013). (Nuwahereza, 2024) in his writing notes that proper EIA implementation fosters sustainability and guides sound decision-making during project planning. EIA strengthens development control framework by promoting sustainable urban growth and minimising environmental degradation.

Measures used in the Enforcement of Development Control Regulations

When a contravention is identified in any Estate, a report will be made to the Zonal Town Planning Officer. He will authorise the writing and issuance of a contravention and stop work order to be issued to the erring developer. He will be given a period of 7 days to removed or demolished the illegal structure. If not complied, another 14 days' notice will be served followed by a 21 days' notice for the developer to comply with the order. Finally, a 7 days' notice of intention to demolish the illegal structure will be written to the developer. An 'X' sign has already been marked earlier with warning notices. If the developer failed or ignored the directive given, after the expiration of the deadline given, the structure will be demolished at the developers cost, to serve as a deterrent to others who might contemplate engaging in such illegality.

The enforcement of development control regulation is applied through the use of the following notices: Contravention notices, Stop work notices, Demolition notices, Invitation for meeting and Quit notice.

CONTRAVENTION NOTICE: Is issued by planning authority when the developer has violated building regulations. It is usually the first step taken when violation is observed as directed by the Urban and Regional Planning Act 1992. Contravention notice shows the following:(a) Date served(b) The alleged contravention and (c) Deadline to perfect the correction of the breach. When a developer is served contravention, he is expected to bring all the necessary documents, in case of dispute. The notice lasts for 21 days from the day it was served.

STOP WORK NOTICE: This is another tool or instrument used by the development control to stop unauthorised development in Uyo Capital City jurisdiction. This instrument is an essential

tool to curtail excessive development in the Uyo Capital Territory. It is usually denoted by “X” followed by the initials of the organisation and the department of Development control’s initials “DC”

DEMOLITION NOTICE: it is an official directive issued by the Development Control Unit when a structure poses serious threat to public safety, environmental quality, or tranquillity of the estate. It is the final measures taken after prior notices (contravention notice and stop work notice) have failed to achieve compliance. Demolition notice has 21 days’ notice of service expiration. The cost of demolition is usually borne by the developer (Uyo Capital City Development Act 1988).

INVITATION FOR MEETING: This instrument is used to invite a developer for an amicable solution of a problem found in developer’s property, for example, encroachment and building in an unauthorised place (Building on fence) and blocking of access.

QUIT NOTICE: It is a directive issued by planning authority to a developer occupying a land or property illegally or in violation of the planning regulations. It serves as a formal instruction to vacate the premises within a specified period of time, usually 7 to 14 days. If the developer fails to vacate the premises within the specified time, the authority may proceed with forceful demolition.

In order to maintain the beauty of the estates in Akwa Ibom State, it is essential to recognise housing as a fundamental human need next to food. Development control should be strengthened and regularly updated to reflect current realities.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, both the quantitative and qualitative approaches of mixed research design was adopted, with an analytical approach. Primary and secondary data were utilised. Primary data were obtained from residents of the federal housing estate through questionnaire administration. Secondary data were obtained from library sources such as articles, journals, internet, and paper presentations amongst others.

A total of 967 housing units were found in the Uyo federal housing estate. Using six persons as Average Household Size, produced a total of 5,802 persons. Taro Yamane’s formula was applied for a finite sample size of 374. However, only 319 copies of the administered questionnaires were returned. Study data were evaluated using simple statistics like percentages, rankings and weighted mean.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

i. Frequency of Development Control Activities by Planning Authority in the Estate

Table 1 indicates the frequency of development control activities of planning authority in the estate. 75 Respondents representing 23.5% affirmed that planning authority very often carry out development control activities, respondents that affirms to planning authority carrying out development control activities often amounted to 106 representing 33.2%. Respondents who posited that planning authority do not very often carry out development control activities in the estate were 111 representing 34.8% while 27 representing 8.5% posited that planning authority do not carry out development control activities in the estate at all.

Table 1: Respondents response on Frequency of Development Control Activities by Planning Authority in the Estate

Frequency of Development Control Activities by Planning Authority in the Estate	Numbers	Percentage
Very Often	75	23.5
Often	106	33.2
Not very Often	111	34.8
Not at all	27	8.5
Total	319	100

Source: field work, 2025.

ii. Effectiveness of Development Control Strategies

Table 2 indicates the effectiveness of development control strategies from the participants. From the table, it was seen that the most effective development control strategy used in the federal housing estate, Uyo was the sub-division regulations, second on the table was the environmental impact assessment. Building code sits third and zoning ordinance was the least most effective development control strategy adopted by the planning authority.

Table 2: Effectiveness of Development Control Strategies

Development Control Strategies	Highly Effective	Effective	Fair	Poorly Effective	Not Effective	Sum	WM (Weighted Mean)	Rank
Building Code	42	94	88	60	35	1005	3.2	3 rd
Zoning regulation	27	54	68	95	75	820	2.6	4 th
Sub-division Regulations	67	120	43	49	40	1082	3.4	1 st
Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)	48	96	79	70	26	1027	3.2	2 nd

Source: field Work, 2025.

Various Factors Affecting Development Control in the Federal Housing Estate

Table 3 examined the various factors affecting development control in the federal housing estate. 88 or 27.6% of the respondents posited that stubbornness from developers and land owners as a serious factor affecting development control in the estate. 47 or 14.7% of the respondents affirmed that the lack of man power and personnel from the planning authority also impacted on development control in the estate. 75 or 23.5% of the respondents posited that political influence from policy makers' affects development control in the federal housing estate while, 79 or 24.8% respondents said that poor funding of the planning Authority/staff as well hinders their effective functioning. Also, 30 or 9.4% of the respondents affirmed that lack of awareness and sensitisation programmes impedes development control in the federal housing estate, Uyo.

Table 3: Respondents response on Various Factors Affecting Development Control in the Federal Housing Estate, Uyo.

Various Factors Affecting Development Control in the Federal Housing Estate, Uyo.	Numbers	Percentage
Stubbornness of Developers and Home owners	88	27.6
Lack of Man Power and Personnel from the Planning Authority	47	14.7
Political Influence	75	23.5
Poor funding of the planning Authority	79	24.8
Lack of awareness/sensitisation programmes	30	9.4
Total	319	100

Source: field Work, 2025.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The development control strategies adopted by the planning authority while carrying out development control in the federal housing estate were 4, namely; the building code, the zoning regulation, sub-division regulations and the environmental impact assessment (EIA). These strategies were effective in one way or the other in controlling development in the estate. The most effective of them all was the sub-division regulation which showed the allocations of plots as well the setbacks necessary for carrying out development. Also, the least effective of these strategies was the zoning ordinance. As revealed by respondents, this was so because majority of them were not aware of its implication.

From the study, it was revealed that the factors affecting development control in the estate were; stubbornness of developers and house owners, political Influence, lack of man power/personnel, poor funding and lack of awareness/sensitisation programmes. Respondents affirmed that some developers sometimes ignored the directives given by the planning authorities, then go ahead to develop what they had in mind. While some home owners develop attachments and makeshift buildings without approvals. These attachments can come in the form of shops, kiosks amongst others. Political Influence is another serious factor affecting development control. It was revealed that some resident carry out development of their choice without approvals as a result of their position in government/society. It was also discovered that the lack of awareness/sensitisation on the part of the developers hindered effectiveness of regulated urban development in the estate.

The factors affecting development regulations in the estate has limited the effectiveness of development control and as well create difficulty for the authorities while carrying out their development control activities.

The development regulation measures adopted in the estate for development control are highly effective. Although few of the measures are not issued to land owners and developers often, generally, its effectiveness has helped improve and aid in the control of development in the federal housing estate.

CONCLUSION

In the study, the significance of both development control strategies and development control measures adopted in the federal housing estate were examined alongside the factors affecting development control in the estate. It was discovered that the development control strategies as well as the development control measures were highly effective and impacting in the estate irrespective of the numerous challenges confronting the exercise. In view of these challenges, here are some recommendations:

- i. Adequate mechanism should be put in place to accommodate more personnel and man power to improve on the frequency of monitoring and development control.

- ii. The issue of political Influence should be tackled at the top tier (government) which would give Planning Authority the enablement to execute their functions/duties without interference.
- iii. Adequate funding of the Planning Authority.
- iv. Regular training of the staff.
- v. Improvement on the salary and welfare package of the staff of the development control unit.

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