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## ARCHITECTS AND DEVELOPMENT CONTROL POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

Development Control Departments have become a veritable tool in administering effective physical development of urban areas worldwide. The centrality of Architects in this administrative unit of urban governance cannot be over emphasized as they are the ones that conceive the vision that is finally translated into a built environment and as such need to be present as the process unfolds. The presence of architects and the level of their involvement in the development control process in Benue state was investigated in this research. It was discovered that there was a total absence of architects in any development control organ in the state, and architects were only invited from the state ministry of works, housing and urban development, from time to time during critical times to vet special submissions, for a few hours a day. This has created a poor urban environment in the state, with ugly landscapes, cityscapes and haphazard built environment. The building permit process itself is fraught with irregularities and abuse of process, creating a chaotic vista which portends difficulty in the near future of urban areas of the state given the rapid urbanization rate in the state. Recommendations were then given on how to stem the tide in the immediate and long term basis on how to reverse this trend.

**Keywords:** Development Control, Building Permits Process, Architect, Built Environment

### INTRODUCTION

Buildings are erected within planned or unplanned environments in rural or urban settings, but properly designed and constructed buildings are complementary to a planned environment, as it connotes a deliberate relationship between Planning, Architecture and other allied professionals in the built

Environment (Usman, 2015). The legal provisions and scope for development control practice in Nigeria stem from the Nigerian Urban and Regional Planning Act 1992 that allows for all tiers of government to exercise development control; other sources of control and enforcement include bye-laws, regulations, guidelines, official gazettes, circulars and the National Building Code (Yusuf, 2015). According to The Nigerian Urban and regional planning Law No. 88 of 1992 as amended (1998), there shall be the establishment of the followings for the sake of Development control;

- A) National Planning Commission at the Federal level
- B) State Urban and Regional Board at the state level
- C) Local Planning Authority at the Local Government level

A Board shall comprise the following members:-

- (a) A chairman;
  - (b) One representative each of the following professions;
    - (i) Town planning, (ii) Architecture, (iii) Civil Engineer, (iv) Land Surveying, (v) Estate Surveying;
  - (c) One representative each of the following;
    - The state Environmental protection Agency,
    - NEPA (PHCN);
  - (d) one representative each of (i) Ministry of works and Housing (ii) Ministry of Agriculture ( ii) Ministry of Finance;
  - (e) Five representatives from the Local Government;
  - (f) A Secretary appointed by the Board who shall be the Chief executive of the Board;
- (2) The chairman referred to in subsection 8(1) (a) of this section shall have being a registered member in professional practice for a minimum of five years.
- (3) The secretary referred to in subsection 8(1) (f) of this section shall be a registered Town Planner with a minimum of five years professional practice.



The state Urban and regional Board shall establish Multi-Disciplinary Department at the state and capitals to be known as Department of Development Control whose main function shall be for the control of physical developments at the State Capital and local government areas. Buildings are designed by duly registered Architects in private practice, in accordance to set standards and regulations by local, state and national governments, and are meant to be vetted and processed for approval by Architects and allied professionals employed by government in urban development boards or departments of development controls, to ensure that physical development policies of government are strictly adhered to, ensuring quality of construction and physical development of urban areas. According to Usman (2015), the Architect principally prepares Building plans for submission; other professionals act as supports to the whole process. The Architect molds or shapes a planned Environment, protects the integrity of the profession, displays creativity in the production of concepts that display a relationship to land-use regulation and the environment. An Architect's designs are not deceptive in intended functions but contribute in realizing the dreams of the design urban areas. Above all, an Architect is a gentleman and disciplined citizen. The principal definition of Development Control in the context of the Urban and Regional Planning act means granting Development Permits in our Urban and Rural Lands

### **Statement of the Problem**

In recent past, a trend has emerged where everyone who has knowledge of computer aided drafting software, and with the ability to manipulate online generic building designs have turned to quasi-Architects, designing and submitting building designs for building approvals and permits across Nigeria. This has had the effect of belittling the profession, the proliferation of sub-standard designs, designs that are incongruent with our

environment, quackery leading to the gradual and eventual disregard for any recourse to professional Architects in construction process, which has the potential of spelling the death knell of practice for professional Architects.

### **Aim of research**

This research is meant to find out if the departments of Development Control are properly staffed with qualified Architects who duly assess design submissions and vet them in accordance with policies for issuing building permit, through the following.

### **Objectives**

- i. To determine the constituted boards of development control units of urban areas;
- ii. To investigate the presence of Architects in the current boards;
- iii. To establish the extent Architects participate in the building permit approval process;
- iv. To investigate how proper architectural quality control during the vetting process;
- v. To determine how quackery is check-mated in the building permit processing.

### **Research Questions**

- i. Are there duly constituted Development Control Boards in place in urban areas in the state?
- ii. Do they have duly qualified Architects in their employ?
- iii. To what extent are they involved in the building permit approval process?
- iv. How do they ensure proper architectural quality control during the vetting process?



v. To what extent quackery is check-mated in the building permit processing?

### **Scope**

This research was conducted in selected main urban areas in Benue state in the North Central Zone of Nigeria. This scope was delimited to act as a pilot study for the eventual broadening of its scope to cover the entire country, and also to facilitate the quick completion of the work as the research was time bound. This enabled for travel to the main urban areas in the senatorial zones to collect data within a period of four (4) weeks.

### **Justification**

The challenge posed to the Architectural profession and Architects in Nigeria by the proliferation of quackery and low quality control is alarming. Quasi Architects have infiltrated the building industry and are gradually replacing professional Architects in the execution of projects for private developers and foreign investors. Findings from this research will enable the Nigerian Institute of Architects (NIA), and Architects Registration council of Nigeria (ARCON) to synergize with government to formulate policies to check this ugly trend, regain the prestige and nobility of the profession and its pride of place in the construction industry in Nigeria.

### **Literature Review**

Development controls have been defined as the mechanism through which entire process of urban development is regulated to achieve the objective of promoting overall benefit of the society and creating a distinct image of the city. It includes guiding the development and use of land, curbing misuse of land and promoting rational and orderly development of built environment. Development controls are required to meet

situations and contexts which are generally static. In this context they tend to become too rigid and complex. Looking at the far reaching impact and implications of the development controls on the growth and development, character, fabric and personality of a city, they need to be framed with great care and abundant caution. Considering the larger public interest and general welfare of the community, formulation of the development control should satisfy the basic requirements of the health, safety convenience, economy and amenity (Chandigarh Masterplan, 2006).

Urban and Regional Planning or Town Planning started in Nigeria as far back as 1917, when the Township Ordinance came into effect in Lagos and empowered the Governor-General to declare and administer any place or area as first, second or third class township. For this purpose the local authority was empowered to administer by way of bye-laws matters relating to conservancy, sanitation and building regulations in the designated townships throughout the country. It all started even when families and individuals had absolute title to land. The Township Ordinance was followed by the Lagos Town Planning Ordinance of 1928 and the Nigeria Town and Country Planning Act of 1946, with the latter having effect on a national scale. With the adoption of a federal constitution in 1954, town planning became regionalized and the centre was left with no discernible planning powers. Consequently, the emergent Northern, Western and Eastern Regions re-enacted the 1946 Act as their respective Regional Laws. In Lagos, this was later complemented by the Lagos Planning (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act of 1967 and, subsequently, the Town and Country Law of 1972.

However, the trend changed again when the Nigerian Urban and Regional Planning Decree (the Decree) was promulgated by the





then Federal Military Government on the 5th of December 1992. Among other things, the Decree conferred on the Federal Government the responsibility of formulating national policies for urban and regional planning; formulating urban and regional planning standards for Nigeria; supervising and monitoring the execution of projects in urban and regional planning; and maintaining development control over federal lands (Osinbajo, 2004). The surprising thing is that the law has not come to full operation since then. For physical development and social well-being to be realized, there is need to actualize the usage of the act (Vivan, Kyom and Balasom. 2013). The most important document for the development control of buildings is the national building Code.

A building code is a collection of laws, regulations, ordinances, or other statutory requirements adopted by a government legislative authority that is involved in assuring the adequacy of the physical structures and healthy conditions of buildings. (United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA). Building codes establish predictable, consistent minimum standards that are applied to the quality and durability of construction materials. The primary purpose of a building code is to regulate new or proposed construction. Taiwo (2010) notes that, a building code or building control is a set of rules that specify the minimum acceptable level of safety for constructed objects such as buildings and non-building structures; and that the main purpose of building codes are to protect public health, safety and general welfare as they relate to the construction and occupancy of buildings and structures. The National Building Code (NBC) is a set of minimum standards on building pre-design, designs, construction and post-construction stages with a view to ensuring quality, safety and proficiency in the building industry. It applies to all matters concerning the design and specification,

costing, construction, alteration, addition to, moving, demolition, location, repair and use of any building or structure, for existing or proposed building works within the Federal Republic of Nigeria. (NBC, 2006)

### **Development of The National Building Code in Nigeria, 2006**

In 1987, the defunct National Council of Works and Housing, directed that a National Building Code be evolved for Nigeria. All the stakeholders in the Building Industry were duly contacted to make input at a National workshop which was held at the Administrative Staff College of Nigeria (ASCON), Badagry, Lagos State in 1989, organized by the defunct Federal Ministry of Works and Housing. A follow-up workshop held at the Gateway Hotel, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State in 1990 and brought up a draft National Building Code which was approved by the then National Council on Housing in 1991 but was not ratified by the then Federal Executive Council for use in the Country. The 1991 draft document was re-presented to the 2nd National Council on Housing and Urban Development held in Port-Harcourt, November, 2005 and the Council directed that the document be widely circulated to all stake holders for input to facilitate the production of an acceptable National Building Code.

The final restructured draft document developed from three parts to four and was completed in 2006 and signed as a National Building Code by the then Minister for Lands, Housing and Urban Development, Dr. Olusegun Mimiko with the hope that every tier of government, (federal, state and local), would adopt and imbibe the spirit and intent of the Code, and that State Governments would integrate the provisions of the Code into their local laws and efficiently monitor the implementation of the Code. The seven professions of the Building Industry and their respective Regulatory Bodies, respectively Architecture, Building,





Engineering, Estate Surveying and Valuation, Quantity Surveying, Surveying, and Urban and Regional Planning; contributed to the success of the production of the first edition of the National Building Code. (NBC, 2006)

### **The Composition of the Code**

The Draft document was restructured from three (3) parts to four (4) parts as follows:

(i) Part I changes from *Administration and Environment* to *Administration*;

(ii) Part II forms *Classifications and Requirements*, subdivided into two major divisions: Sections 4 and 5 then Sections 6-12 respectively. The second division charges the major stakeholders in the Building Industry to produce her own *requirements* as per the *working tools* from Sections 4 and 5.

(iii) Part III forms the Enforcement part of the Codes.

The entire Building Process is divided into four (4) convenient stages and developed under two (2) subheadings:

(a) Pre-Design Stage - Requirements and Enforcement;

(b) Design Stage - Requirements and Enforcement;

(c) Construction Stage - Requirements and Enforcement; and

(d) Post-Construction Stage - Requirements and Enforcement.

(iv) Part IV is made up of a separate part namely, *Schedules*, where all *supportive documents, data, tables, information* and all sorts of *relevant and approved application forms* to Part I, II, and III can be found. (NBC, 2006)

In summary, The National Building Code, 2006 is divided into four (4) parts and fifteen (15) sections as shown below:

(a) Part 1: Administration (Sections 1-3)

(b) Part 2: Technical (Classification of the Professionals in the building industry) (Sections 4-12)

(c) Part 3: Enforcement (Section 13)

(d) Part 4: Schedules and References (Sections 14-15)

The building process was divided into four (4) stages:

- (i) Pre-design Stage
- (ii) Design Stage
- (iii) Construction Stage
- (iv) Post- construction Stage.

### **Importance of the Code**

The need to evolve a National Building Code became imperative following existing conditions in Nigerian urban areas, cities and environment in general which summed up as:

- (a) The absence of planning of our towns and cities;
- (b) Incessant collapse of buildings,
- (c) incessant fire infernos,
- (d) the abuse of the built environment;
- (c) dearth of referenced design standards for professionals;
- (d) Use of non-professionals and quacks;
- (e) Use of untested products and materials;
- (f) Lack of maintenance culture. (NBC, 2006)

Whether this has so far been tackled or not is the thrust of this research.

### **Tools and Machineries of Development Control**

Basically, there are two instruments or tools often used in the development control process. These are:

- (i) **Enforcement Notice:** This is served on any breach of Town Planning law relating to carrying out development without the planning permission (approval). It relates to illegal building, engineering, mining, change of use and so on. This notice may be served either for demolition of such building without approval or the restoration of an altered building to its previous condition pursuant to section 47 (1) of the Urban and Regional Planning Decree (88) of 1992. Noncompliance with an enforcement order is punishable.



(ii) **Stop Notice:** According to section of the Urban and Regional Planning Decree (88) of 1992, a stop work order could be issued where it appears to the control department that: a. An unauthorized development is being carried out, b. Where a development does not comply with a development permit issued by the control department. The document is issued pending the service of an enforcement notice on the owner, occupier or holder of such property. It takes an immediate effect upon service on such property. The time frame is usually 21 days within which such developer shall comply with the provisions of section 53 (Vivan et al, 2013).

### **Brief History of Development Control in Benue State**

According to the official bulletin of the Benue State Urban Development Board (BSUDB), Development Control started in Benue State as the Makurdi Capital Development Authority (MCDA) which was set up in 1976 at the creation of the state from the defunct Benue-Plateau State. . This was replaced two (2) years later by the Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO), which was established in 1978. The Benue State Urban Development Board is a creation of the Urban Development Board edict Number 8 of 1986. The Board was created to, among other functions, administer, execute and enforce the provisions of the town and country planning law. The Board is therefore empowered to plan, promote and secure the physical development and regional development policies, plans and activities in respect of all urban areas of the state. It is instructive to add that it was the desire of government to eliminate the bureaucratic bottlenecks, which bedevil the ministries that were handling physical planning and development functions that informed the creation of the Urban Development Board as a specialized unit to meet the urban development needs of the state.

### Responsibilities and Functions of the Board

1. Approval of building plans for all developments for private, individuals and government organizations.
2. Monitoring and control of developments to conform to planning standards in all urban areas within the state.
3. Preparation of layout plans and master plans for all urban centres in the state.
4. Execution and enforcement of the provisions of the National Urban and Regional law.
5. Opening of access roads
6. Formulation, monitoring and coordination of physical and regional development policies, plans and activities.
7. The provision of flower/plant nursery for sale to the members of the public and for official use when the need arises.
8. Demolition of illegal structures
9. Acquisition and storage of data on all urban matters in the state.
10. Provision of technical assistance/consultancy services to private individuals and government agencies.
11. Development and maintenance of parks and gardens and green areas
12. Street naming
13. Street signs and signage's and house numbering
14. Provision of satellite towns where and when necessary to discourage influx of people from the suburbs to the city centre.
15. Preparation and implementation of landscape designs for public places and road corridors.
16. Preparation of prototype designs for government and private individuals (BSUDB, 2017).

This implies that freedom to carry out physical development is restricted such that approval will be sought for any form of



development, and such development will be regulated to conform to the approved guidelines, specifications or regulations. In essence development application can be rejected, granted or withdrawn; and even the development itself can be encouraged, stopped, modified or even pulled down depending on circumstances and degree of conformity or non-conformity (Rangwala and Rangwala 2013). Building permit to a large extent falls within the purview of architecture and architects, as they are the ones that mold or shape planned Environments, and consciously maintain a balanced relationship between land-use regulation and the environment. This point is buttressed by Tonye Braide, 26<sup>th</sup> President of the Nigerian Institute of Architects (NIA), where in an interview granted to journalist, decried the fact that the existing building code has not yet been enforced in its totality and that most of regulations are carried-over vestiges of colonial era input. He stressed in particular that the clauses which have to do with the approval of buildings should be vetted by Architects and processed by architects in the development control offices. Architects should be able to examine the quality of design and not be subject to planners. It is against this backdrop that this research seeks to research into the extent of involvement of Architects in the process of building permit processing and approval processes in the department of Development Control in Benue state.

### **The Study Area**

Benue State is a state in the mid-belt region of Nigeria with a population of about 4,253,641 in 2006 census. It is inhabited predominantly by the Tiv and Idoma peoples, who speak the Tiv language and Idoma, respectively. There are areas of low population density. such as Guma, Gwer East, Ohimini, Katsina-Ala, Apa, Logo and Agatu, each with less than seventy persons per square kilometre, while Vandeikya, Okpokwu, Ogbadibo, Obi and

Gboko have densities ranging from 140 persons to 200 persons per square kilometre. Makurdi LGA has over 380 people per square kilometre. The males are 49.8 percent of the total population while females constitute 50.2 per cent. Three towns stand out very clearly as important urban centres which together account for more than 70 per cent of the social amenities provided in the state and almost all the industrial establishments. These centres are Makurdi, Gboko and Otukpo. They are amongst the oldest towns in the state and are growing at a much faster rate than the smaller younger towns. Makurdi doubles as the capital of the state and the headquarters of Makurdi LGA, while Gboko and Otukpo double as local government and ethnic headquarters (i.e. for Tiv and Idoma ethnic groups respectively). All the roads in the state radiate from these three centres. As an administrative unit, Benue State was first created on 3 February 1976. It was one of the seven states created by the military administration headed by General Murtala Mohammed, which increased the number of states in the country from 13 to 19. In 1991, its boundaries were re-adjusted with the creation of Kogi State. The new Benue State of today has twenty (23) local government areas, which are administered by local government councils (Seibert, 2007).



*Benue State, courtesy Google Images, 2017*





## **METHODOLOGY**

To accomplish this study, information was sought in line with the aims and objectives of this research through interviews with the staff of the Urban Development Board (UDB), which is the Development Control agency of the state. This is because the staff of the Board constitutes the target population that contain the type of information this research sought to find out. This helped in generating primary data for the research. Semi-structured interview was employed as the research tool. This is because semi-structured interviews have the ability for in-depth probes. Respondents have option to answer preset open-ended questions be it an individual or sometimes even with a group (Jamshed, 2014). Five interviews were conducted in total on four different days, two in Makurdi and one each in Oturkpo, Gboko and Katsina-Ala respectively. The interviews covered the duration of an hour each, based on semi-structured interview guide. The interview guide will comprise of questions which address the issues raised in the objectives of this research (See appendix attached). In order to have the interview data captured more effectively, recordings of the interviews were done to ensure proper and precise capture of data and information that was gathered.

Prior consent of the respondents was sought prior to conducting the interviews, through a prior courtesy call. The option of sending advance letters was not used because this have the drawback of alerting the respondents to prepare synchronized responses, rather than spontaneous factual responses that can be triangulated (Jamshed, 2014). The interview sought to know the extent of involvement of Architects in the process of building permit processing and approval processes in the department of Development Control in Benue state. The information gathered was used to correlate the findings with how proper architectural

quality control is ensured during the vetting process, and what is done to weed out submissions of building designs by quacks in the building permit processing. Interviews were granted by the Assistant Director, Planning; and the Chief Town Planning Officer at the Headquarters of the UDB located along Kashim Ibrahim Road, Makurdi, then the other three interviews with the various Zonal Planning Officers in Oturkpo, Gboko and Katsina-Ala. Data collected from the interviews was then analysed based on thematic content analysis. Five themes were developed in line with the objectives of the research, and each was developed as a sub-set of the preceding theme viz-a-viz; Presence of a constituted board, Professionals in the employ of the board, proper vetting and quality control of architectural vetting, ensuring and enforcement of all submissions, and the proper check-mating of quackery by ensuring only designs and submissions from registered architects are entertained. The findings from the interview are presented.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

1. The board has its headquarters domiciled in Makurdi the state headquarters, and operates three other offices on a zonal basis in Katsina-Ala, Gboko and Oturkpo, representing the largest urban centres in the state and senatorial zones A, B and C respectively.
2. The board is headed by a General Manager, who is a Planner, and has the town planning division and building permit division under him. All of these offices are headed by planners.
3. There is no Architect engaged by the board, rather the board, from time to time, request for the services of an architect from the parent ministry of Works, Housing and Urban Development. This is because the state government cited inability to pay salaries of Architects for the board, but prefer to use those in the ministry already in its employ to carry out



- the duty of part time vetting, for 2-3 hours from time to time, not on a daily basis.
4. The zonal offices are headed by district officers, normally planners, and maintain lean staff strength just to receive to register submissions of designs, which are then forwarded to the headquarters in Makurdi for building permit processing. No Architect is in any zonal office.
  5. The zonal offices each in turn are responsible for the development control of local governments located in their zones. Katsina-Ala zonal office caters for Ukum, Logo, Kwande, Ushongu, Vandeikya, Konshisha and Katsina-Ala. Gboko zonal office caters for Buruku, Tarka, Guma, Gwer, Gwer East and Gboko. Oturkpo zonal office covers Apa, Agatu, Ohimini, Ogbadibo, Ado, Okpokwu, Obi, Oju and Oturkpo.
  6. These zones are covered by just an officer each (Town Planners), and it takes them weeks to go around their delineated areas of coverage. They operate mostly without any logistical support such as vehicles, driver and support staff.

## DISCUSSION

This study set out to achieve the following objectives;

- i. To find out if there is a duly constituted Development Control Boards in place in urban areas in the state?
- ii. Are there duly qualified Architects in their employ?
- iii. To what extent are they involved in the building permit approval process?
- iv. How do they ensure proper architectural quality control during the vetting process?
- v. To what extent quackery is check-mated in the building permit processing?

These findings reveal that;

- i. There is the absence of a properly and fully constituted Development Control Board. This is due in part to the fact that the state is yet to fully adopt and implement the National Building Code, 2006. This has created loopholes in the administration of development Control in the state, which are effectively exploited by quacks in collusion with unscrupulous elements in the existing structure of the Urban Development Board in the state.
- ii. Since there is no proper board in place, key professionals such as architects and engineers are not in the employ of the board. The absence of Architects, other key members and the Building Code Advisory Committee in the state, has left planners to do as they wish, in that they have become architects, engineers and planners all rolled in one.
- iii. The absence of architects in the employ of the board has given planners the leeway to pervert the system and circumvent due process. They coerce the general public to give them commissions, whence they promptly remodify any similar submission made by qualified architects, then they promptly process same for building permit approval in total circumvention of due process and ethics.
- iv. Since there is no architect in the employ of the development control board in Makurdi, there is no way to ensure and guarantee architectural quality control, as there is virtually no vetting process to ensure this. This is further compounded by the lack of requisitely trained staff and provision of work logistics such as vehicles and plants for enforcement.
- v. Due to the combination of the fore gone i-iv, quacks and other unlicensed players in the building industry thus have a field day and nothing remotely related the vision and spirit of the National Building Code or Development Control is followed. It was expected that the code should be implemented by all the



States and local Governments of the Federation as regulations and bye-laws respectively, however, such is not the case in Benue State.

### **Implications of findings**

From the findings of this research, it can be deduced that;

- i. The Benue State Urban Development Board is not properly constituted, staffed, funded or equipped to perform its statutory duties. This is borne from the fact that government misconstrues Planning Authorities to be revenue generating unit rather than social service providers.
- ii. The Benue State Urban Development Board does not have any Architect in its employ. The state government considers the idea of employing architects to help control development a waste of resources, and labels those in its employ at the ministry of Works, Housing and Urban Development redundant staff to be shuffled around to perform duties they were not employed for. This explains why architectural vetting is handled with levity, and no commitment. Most times, the planning officers only check to see that the drawing sheets have ARCON seal on it, and don't bother to ask for the Architects license or ARCON stamp.
- iii. There is minimal involvement of Architects in the building permit approval process. Therefore, there can be no quality check on the quality of architectural submissions; neither can the qualification and competence of those making the submissions ascertained or controlled to uphold the integrity of the architectural profession.
- iv. It was discovered that the staff themselves make submissions by altering previous design submissions, process and approve them for clients without any recourse to an Architect since there is none to protect the interest of architects and architecture. This is worse at the zonal and local government

levels where it takes weeks for the District officer to go round, and in some cases, to inaccessible remote areas.

- v. All of this has created the sorry state of affairs where poorly designed buildings obtain permit. The urban cityscape and landscape leaves a lot to be desired. There's a proliferation of non-functional designs even in public buildings. Quacks thus are having a field day while duly registered architects are shunned by clients on account of the cheap availability of quacks who can still obtain building permits with their cheaper substandard designs.
- vi. This has greatly reduced the status and importance of architects in the state, and has created a situation where it is an all-comers affair in the design and construction industry.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following are suggestion aimed at reducing the problem to a considerable level;

1. The Urban and Regional Planning Decrees 88 of 1992 should be fully implemented; as this will give legal power to all physical planning agencies to enforce physical planning regulations, thus bringing on board Architects as statutorily required.
2. As a short term measure, the redeployment or secondment of the Architects considered redundant at the state ministries should be done to the zonal offices to curb the corrupt practices that take place at the zonal levels.
3. Regular staff development programs (retraining, refresher courses, seminars, conferences and workshops) for the physical planning personnel, particularly those engaged in development control. This is because the rate of urbanization in Nigeria is very high, therefore proper development control and urban governance practices need to be strengthened to produce livable 21<sup>st</sup> century urban environment.





4. Development control agencies should not be seen by government as agencies for revenue generation, but rather as an arm of government involved in social welfare.
5. There is need for new and relevant. bye laws, edict, acts and regulations to channel the new course of challenges in the built environment profession so that the gains associated with the disciplines can be appreciated by all.
6. Personnel involved in development control should be encouraged and rewarded as when due. Effort should be made to stream line the conditions for carrying out responsibilities within this setting.
7. Public awareness and campaign on development control compliance should be encouraged so that enforcement can be embarked upon in order to achieve the goal of the Code which is to stem the decay of the built environment.

## CONCLUSION

The importance of development control in physical planning, and the central role Architects cannot be over-emphasized. This paper has attempted an examination of the extent of involvement of architects in the building permit approval process nature, scope and dimensions of development control in Benue State. It highlighted the concept of development control and powers due tom it, and centrality of architects role in the building permit approval process. It pointed out the dangers and defects of not having architects in the development control process and recommended immediate short term and long term measures at reversing the negative impact of not having architects in the building permit process. It emphasized the futurist element of development control as the most relevant for healthy and functional urban and rural areas in Nigeria.

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