

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.0 Introduction

This chapter is mainly devoted to draw conclusions from the analysis on the property development done in the suburbs of Colombo. In order to make it clear they have been divided into two parts; Part I deals with the analysis of the overall situation in the suburbs of Colombo, and Part II deals with the indepth study done in Battaramulla, the case study area.

8.1 Part I - General Conclusions

- (a) Colombo is a primate city having an impact on the whole country in general and the suburbs of Colombo in particular.
- (b) All planning efforts from 1915 had concentrated on the development of Colombo City. Most development plans have stressed the importance of regional development, but no concerted effort had been made to achieve this objective.
- (c) After 1977, the policies have been formulated for urban and regional development on the basis of an open economic policy and separate institutions were established to have integrated and orderly development in all urban areas.
Even after 1977, with all the powerful planning institutions, property development had taken place haphazardly in the suburbs of Colombo.

- (d) The development plans made over the last 75 years have not taken the contribution made by the private sector in property development.
- (e) The land market and property development had played a very significant role in urban development. This has happened through subdivision of land, conversion of primary activities into secondary and tertiary activities, change of ownership, intensity of development etc. But the provision of infrastructure facilities; had not kept pace with property development that had taken place.
- (f) In the suburban areas of Colombo property development had taken place, with minimum intervention by planners, and it has resulted in pollution and deterioration of the urban environment. The situation had been further aggravated owing to the lack of essential infrastructural facilities, such as water, roads, sewerage, garbage collection etc.
- (g) The U.D.A. regulations require that 10% of the land area blocked out should be reserved as open spaces. But due to shortcomings in the implementation of this rule, this has not brought satisfactory results.
- (h) It has been observed that the suburban development brought about by the property market had created social disbenefits to the community.

- (i) Planning was introduced to control the monopolistic situation in the land market. But the redistribution of the benefits gained by increase in land values had not taken place through a betterment tax.
- (j) Traditional planning methods and techniques involved in the preparation of a master plan to regulate the land market. It has been criticised due to the cost involved and its rigidity; so development plans which are moreflexible were introduced to achieve better results in property development. The development plan comprises of a structure plan and action plans.
- (k) Suburbs of Colombo could be identified by 13 local authority areas., located between Colombo city and the urban fringe. Within this local authority areas, a homogeneous character could be identified in physical and socio economic factors. Briefly they are
- (1) high rate of population increase.
 - (2) change of land use.
 - (3) increase in intensity of land use.
 - (4) increase in land values.
 - (5) increase in investment in property development.
 - (6) change in normal life style of the people.

Within this homogeneous framework sub-centres are emerging as specified urban activity areas. This can be recognised as functional speciality in the suburbs of Colombo, which could be used for planned sub-regional growth of Colombo. They are Moratuwa, Ratmalana and

Homagama as industrial areas, Nugegoda and Maharagama areas for educational and research activities, Kotte and Battaramulla for administrative purposes and Peliyagoda for warehousing and container yards.

(l) It was found that there is a close relationship between the land development of the suburbs and the functional speciality of areas. More land has been subdivided for residential purposes in the suburbs close to the administrative and educational and institutional speciality areas. Large extents of land had been converted for industrial and warehousing in Peliyagoda and its surroundings. The land development in the suburb had taken place on the basis of profit motive under the free economy. Therefore it was found that the social cost that has to be borne by the residents is very high.

(m) The status of the suburban local authorities have not been changed based on the development trend. Still institutions are functioning under old administrative set up. Most of the local administrative units which were of lower status have been unable to cope up with the development, with their limited financial resources, manpower and legislative measures.

(n) Until 1978 the only legislation that was available for controlling and regulating land development in the suburbs was the Housing and Town Improvement Ordinance of 1915, and the Town and Country Planning Ordinance of 1947. Not only the legislation itself had limitations to encourage private and public sector for planned development, most of the local authorities were also of a lower status.

Several pieces of legislation were enacted after 1977 with the objective of integrated urban planning and development. Among them the U.D.A. Law and G C E C Law had sufficient power to achieve this objective. The objective was to make the respective agencies responsible to have planned urban growth in the suburbs, but the implementation has been limited to the preparation of some land use maps, and the application of new building regulations as enacted by the U.D.A. Due to the lack of a regional development plan and the coordination of institutional activities in the suburbs, development had taken place haphazardly. Planning legislation so far has brought only very limited favourable results for the environmental improvement of the suburbs through property development.

8.1.2 Specific conclusions for Battaramulla Pradeshiya Sabha

- (a) Battaramulla Pradeshiya Sabha lies among the 10 largest towns in Sri Lanka. Over the last decade this area has developed at a very high rate, and most of the national administrative functions and the Parliamentary complex together with some Ministries have been located within this area. But this local authority still remains a Pradeshiya Sabha which is the lowest status in the urban planning and administrative set up.
- (b) It was found that there was no concerted and coordinated effort to guide the development through planning and other legislative measures. The preparation of the development plan for the Pradeshiya Sabha is still in

carried out only in respect of approving building applications, (using U D A building regulations). This practice has considerably weakened the objective of integrated planned development.

(c)

The Most significant factor in the property development in Battaramulla Pradeshiya Sabha is subdivision of agricultural land and putting them into non-agricultural uses. Agents, brokers and land surveyors in the land market had been the main actors in the land subdivision process. They have subdivided, valuable agricultural land indiscriminately creating physical as well as social implications.

(1) One of the significant phenomena in the land subdivision of Battaramulla is the replacement of the indigenous population who were depending on agriculture by migratory urban middle and upper income population.

(2) The land sub-division should have a wide range of purposes such as provision of safe drinking water, sewerage disposal systems, new streets and other utilities, such as open spaces for recreational and environmental improvement. But in Battaramulla apart from the blocking out of raw land, the other services are hardly provided.

(3) This process of land sub-division and the immigration of high income groups had been able to change the local life style of the people in Battaramulla. According to the present land prices in Battaramulla area, the poor have been made to move out of Battaramulla to marginal lands.

(4) Prior to the rapid property development in Battaramulla the average individual plot size was about half an acre. Due to the rise in land values these blocks have been subdivided into an average size of 11 perches.

(d) Roads

Only A and B class roads are mettled and tarred and are well maintained. Many roads which provide access for residential areas are neglected. Some of the roads in sub-division areas are narrow, and are not properly classified for the purpose of repairs and maintainance.

(e) With the increase of population density, disposal of sewerage and garbage has become a severe problem. Due to lack of pipe-borne water supply every family has built a well and a toilet within the small plot of land which is approximately 11 perches. In the long run it is obvious the ground water will be polluted.

(f) There is only one rural hospital in Battaramulla. Medical treatment has to be sought in colombo by the people and have to travel long distances, which is prohibitively expensive as well as time concuming. This is



RECOMMENDATIONS

8.2 Introduction

The recommendations put forward in this study have been worked out after a thorough consideration of the above conclusions related to the overall situation, in the suburbs and the specific situation in Battaramulla. In general terms it is proposed to establish eight principles to guide planned property development in the suburbs to ensure harmonious growth.

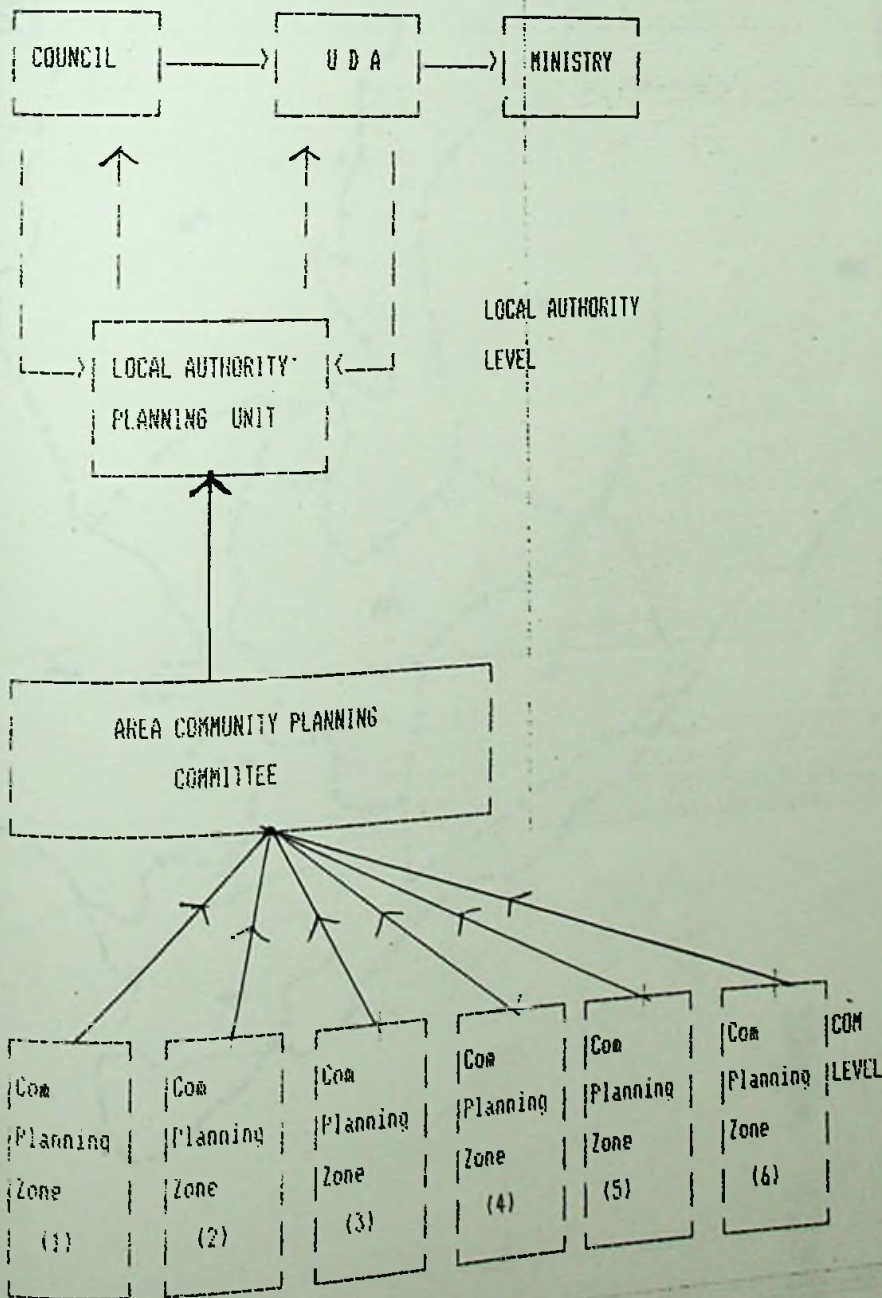
8.2.1 Principle of Participatory Planning

Although the UDA has on various occasions emphasized the need for public participation and in fact has tried to achieve this through the mechanism of planning committees the present practice of preparing development plans for local authorities do not provide adequate opportunities for the people in the area to participate in the planning process. It is still a substantially centralised process where U.D.A. takes all decisions in preparing the development plan. It is suggested that U.D.A. should advocate participatory planning methodology to prepare development plans for the local authorities. The proposed methodology is given in Figure 8.1



Figure 8.1

INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE FOR PARTICIPATORY PLANNING



BATTARAMULLA PRADESIYA SABHAWA

PROPOSED COMMUNITY LEVEL
PLANNING UNITS.



1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8 WARDS

FIG. NO. 8-1

The main objectives of the proposed participatory methodology is to provide opportunity for community groups to involve in the planning process. For this purpose the local authority area is divided into Community Planning Zones based on the existing social and administrative boundaries, e.g. gramasevaniladari division. A zonal plan will be prepared at this level by the residence of the area with the assistance of the following groups.

- I. Representatives from community based organisation.
- II. Gramasevaniladhari.
- III. Head of school.
- IV. Heads of religious organisations.
- V. Police.
- VI. Member of the local authority.
- VII. Technical staff.
 - (a). Planning officer (cordinator)
 - (b). P. H. I.
 - (c). Technical officers of the local authority

This group will participate in a workshop held in the unit to identify the resources and problems. This workshop will be a partnership arrangement between the officials and the community. Participants will, first, identify problems in the zone. Then, all participants will prioritise their needs and seek solutions. Finally participants will decide on solutions for implementation in the short run and in the long run.

Final outcome of this work shop will be a set of draft unit development proposals. Similar development proposals will be prepared in all units in the local

authority area. The planning officer of the local authority will co-ordinate all these workshops.

The second stage is that all zonal plans will be in co-operated into one plan by using the same participatory methodology. This stage is to make proposals for the Area Development Plan. Participants for this workshop are as follows;

1. Chairman of local authority.
2. A G A / Divisional secretary
3. Ward members
4. Ward representatives
5. Heads of religious organisations
6. Police
7. Heads of schools
8. Technical staff of local authority
9. P.H.I.s
10. Planning officer of local authority
(co-ordinator)
11. UDA Officer in charge of the District
12. Official from R.D.A.
Official from N.H.D.A.
Official from N.W.R. & D.B.
Official from Valuation Department
Official from S.L.R.D.A.
13. Representative from Rate payers association

After development problems area-wise are identified, and prioritised. The group will seek solutions. Similarly the group will decide on short term and long term solutions and action projects. The outcome of this workshop will be the "Draft Area Development Plan". Local authority will form a "Area Level Development Planning Committee", and the committees will meet from time to time to improve the unit proposals and Area Plan.

Planning officer of the local authority will prepare the Draft Urban Development Plan and submit it to the council for their comments. After considering their comments the plan is then referred back to the Area Level Planning Committee. The final plan is then submitted to be the U.D.A. for their comments. The Planning Officer will then prepare the final development plan and submit to the Minister for approved.

8.2.2 Principle of Functional Identity

Each town has to play a functional role in the context of overall economic situation in the suburban fabric to ensure its effective contribution for overall development. In the case of Battaramulla its functional role is to develop the town as administrative centre where the core administrative functions should be located in appropriate centres to sub centres, which ensure physical interaction and the functional linkages among the different functional units within the town, other suburban units and the service hinterland.

The functional role of a city will determine the activities and life style of the citizens. The life style of the citizens will be determined by the change in environment brought about by three major components, namely land, labour and capital resources. Capital is turned into structures and equipment, and by such processes, changes in human activity are generated and sustained. Similarly the space get adapted for a particular functional role which gives a character and identify as distinguished from other suburban towns. It will also increase the functional efficiency of the town, by specialisation. Therefore the above principle leads through to the recommendation of functional identity of a town. It is

inevitable and so is the case in Colombo and the suburban town Battaramulla. Therefore the local authorities for planned development of suburban towns should develop their property development guide lines in relations to the functional role of the respective towns. Shifting of administrative functions to Battaramulla town must be carried out in such a way that those activities must be located in the proposed suburban centres to ensure harmonious growth of residential commercial and light industrial activities together with necessary amenities and facilities to acquire the change in life style.

When making development plans for the local authority, for promoting property development by the private sector, the local authority should ensure that functional identify is not jeopardised.

The property development guide-lines ie detailed parameters and standards must be spelt out in the light of such locational analysis at macro-level, based on this broad principle.

8.2.3 Principle of Harmonious Development

This principle must be applied to ensure effective development of a land use. The planning authorities have failed to develop a suitable land use plan due to several reasons. The land use pattern must be determined after careful analysis of macrolevel metropolitan system and in detailed micro-level suburban system in relation to the functional role, of the particular suburb. The existing land use pattern must be carefully analysed and the future targets must be set accordingly to fulfil the achievement of its functional role. After completing this process the

planner will face the problem of different types of activities envisaged. For instance the residential property development will require provision of facilities and amenities at three levels viz individual, family and finally the community.

This means organising in a harmonious manner the cohesive land use fabric avoiding conflicting land uses from the locational point of view. The planning authority must thoroughly follow these guidelines and the property developer should strictly adhere to the guidelines. In order to achieve the ideals of this principle the following actions are suggested.

1. A register of property developers should be maintained in the planning authority.
2. A register of professionals engaged in development; planners, architects, valuers, engineers etc. must be maintained in the planning authority.

For a registration as a property developer, the overall understanding about the requirement of the planning authority, and the capability of understanding such development programmes, should be tested. The property developer who does not comply the requirements of the planning authority in the implementation of projects should be blacklisted and this information must be made available to the brother authorities.

The qualifications of the professionals who are involved in property development should be the qualifications acceptable to the Professional Institutes, and they will be known as the qualified persons.

8.2.4 Principle of Regulatory Control

This is to ensure that property development is taking place according to the principles of development planning regulatory enactments in the country and the by-laws applicable to the particular local authority. The regulations will ensure that property development is conducive for living and working and it will provide better framework to maintain desirable development. For effective implementation of these regulations the following guidelines are proposed:

- (a) At present, a uniform system of building regulations are applied by all local authorities as given in the H & T I ordinance or the U D A regulations without regard to the social, economic, demographic and physical characteristics of the area. It is proposed that these regulations should be formulated with the active participation of the unit and area planning committees.
- (b) For the purpose of monitoring property development in the local authority area, the local authority should maintain the following registers:
 - (i) A register of land subdivisions giving full details of location, land value, land ownership, plot sizes and available infrastructural facilities etc. If an application is refused the reasons should be indicated.
 - (ii) A register of building applications giving the location, use, floor area ratio (in the case of commercial

development) and availability of infrastructural facilities. If there is a refusal the reasons should be clearly stated.

- (c) Proper implementation and enforcement of planning and building regulations formulated with the active participation of user groups. Information about building regulations should be available for the people in the area. The planning officer in the local authority should play an advisory and informative role to educate the people in the area on planning and development. This will promote a sense of belonging to the area and a public spirit to maintain an area in a proper and pleasing manner, and cast the responsibility of maintenance on the people of the area.

8.2.5 Principle of Investment Promotion

The local authority should have planning guidelines which must be development oriented. They should not only be control oriented. This principle will ensure the attraction of investment into the area, generating employment to the people and income to the local authority for its functional role thereby strengthening the capacity of urban funds available for investment. In order to build up the financial resource base of the local authority, this principle must be effectively implemented using the methodology underlined below:

- (a) The local authority must identify and plan action projects in the process of preparation of development plans, as spelt out in principle of

participatory development planning. To ensure targetted growth the action plans must be prepared in such a way that it should play a positive role in inviting investors and must be prepared to meet the needs of those investors, in terms of reducing risk, and providing the necessary linkages, and incentives.

- (b). A resource inventory including human resource should be prepared by the local authority.
- (c). The local authority should allocate sites for vocational and training schools to attract sush schools into the area for development of human resources.
- (d). The local authority should alocate sites for investment promotion particularly for small and light industries and should give particular emphasis on local labour and material for harmonious development.
- (e). The local authority must establish the system whereby linkages with the development activities located within the regieon are achieved.
- (f). When the prospects for property development is not bright the local authority should establish a partnership with property developers to share part of the risk. The local authority provide the land and share the profits in the form of ground rent. For this purpose a project cell must be set up within the local authority and should be manned by trained officers in property development and management.



8.2.6 Principle of Development Management

This principle is to ensure efficient implementation of all the principles in an effective manner. The case study reveals that as concluded in the preceding pages, the local authorities are lacking the institutional support and necessary staff for effective implementation of the provisions made in the UDA Law.

The local authority must be enriched with a well trained staff in addition to the general staff in order to achieve this target. The following programme must be implemented.

Local authority must have a very strong service interaction programme with the Department of Valuation. The Department of Valuation must operate in such a way that in regard to Valuation of properties, a Valuation officer must be stationed on a regular basis by the local authority. For this purpose the following methodology can be adopted:

A survey must be carried out in every suburban local authority area. In the light of this, site value assessment register must be maintained, by the local authority. The site value register will be prepared by assessing the value of site and not on improvements made on the land, such as houses, offices, factories etc. It represents only the open market value of the bare site in comparison with other sites in the vicinity. Even the persons who keep the site vacant will have to pay the tax which will be a penalty for not putting the site into the best and the highest use. Payment of tax or he will have to sell the site to avoid to earn enough income to develop the property it is expected that land values will come down, because the tax is based on the capital value of the site.

Another reason why land values would come down is that it will increase the supply of the land, because the speculative land will come into the market.

In the case of Battaramulla it has been identified that land values in some parts are as high as Rs. 40,000/- per perch. The Local Authority will be able to get a revenue of Rs. 9,000,000/- by levying a tax of 15% on site value as against Rs.1,000,000 at present.

8.2.7 Principle of Participatory Management

The principle of participatory management has two objectives:

- (1). To devolve the relevant functions of local authorities to the user groups.
- (2). To get the user group to be involved in the management of services and facilities received by them.

Under the present system, a local authority has to carry out all the functions such as garbage collection street sweeping and lighting, maintenance of trees and small parks etc. These are services that could easily be supervised by the recipient groups themselves. The present tendency is for the user groups to complain about the services without participating in the process of performing the services.

Therefore it is proposed to form community management group by unit and to give the responsibility of management of the services to the user group. The local authority can distribute the annual allocation of funds for the provision of services to the unit management committee. Under this arrangement the unit committee

will undertake simple management functions of the local authority, such as garbage collection, drains, small parks and community centres etc. The main infrastructure such as main roads, sewers, canals, will be managed by the local authority.

8.2.8 Principle of Economic Viability

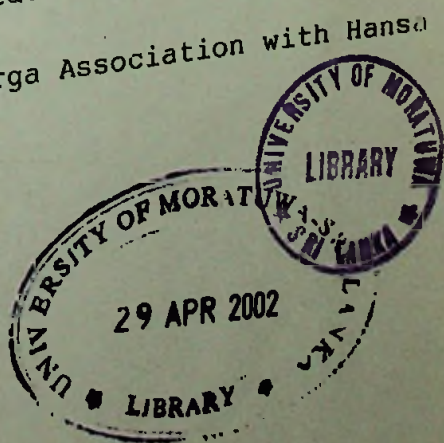
This principle is to maintain and upgrade the economic base of the town. Most suburban towns in the Colombo Metropolitan area including Battaramulla do not possess a strong economic base and as such it is proposed that following guidelines must be implemented to achieve the objective of strengthening the economic base:

Some of the local authorities are so small in size that they cannot be made economically viable. For example Peliyagoda is only 3.2 square kilometres in extent. The corporate area of three local authorities in the suburbs of Colombo are below five kilometres in extent. The rate revenue that could be derived even by high taxation will not be sufficient to maintain the required services. Therefore it is proposed that local authority areas in the suburbs of Colombo should be amalgamated in such a manner that they could be elevated to the status of Municipal Councils so that the councils will have adequate thresholds to make the local authority economically viable and self supporting.

Therefore it is proposed that smaller local authorities should be amalgamated to form a larger unit. For example Kelaniya which is 7.9 square kilometers could be amalgamated with Peliyagoda which is 3.2 square kilometers making a total of 11.1 square kilometers to form one local authority, of Municipal Status.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Andrew Bowers and Chris Hamnett. The Future of Cities, Hutchinson Educational Ltd. London - 1974.
2. Barrie Needham. How Cities Work; Pergomon Press. Oxford, New York Sydney Paris, Frankfurt.
3. Brian Goodall, The Economics of Urban Areas, Pergaman Press. London 1979.
4. Clive Darlow, Valuation and Development Appraisal, The Estate Gazette Ltd. 51 Wardour Street, London W1V4BM.
5. City of Colombo Development Plan. Urban Development Authority, Ministry of Housing and Construction, November 1985.
6. Colin Lee - Models in Planning, An Introduction to the Use of Quantitative Models in Planning Pergoman Press, Oxford, 1974.
7. Down Town Development Handbook, ULI the Urban Land Institute, Washington DC 1980.
8. Ebanizer Howard, Garden Cities of Tomorrow, Attic Books, Suxeex 1985.
9. J Brian Mc Loughlin, Urban and Regional Planning Systems Approach Whitstable Litho Ltd. Kent 1978.
10. John Ratcliffe, An introduction to Town and Country Planning , Hutchcinson & Co. Ltd. London 1974.
11. Marga Journal Vol. 1 No. 1, Marga Association with Hansa Publishers Ltd, 1974.



12. Joseph L Arnold, The New Deal in the Suburbs, Ohio State University Press 1971.
13. Margaret Roberts, An Introduction to Town Planning Techniques, Hutchinson & Co. Ltd. London 1974.
14. Michael Thorncroft, Principles of Estate Management. The Estate Gazette Ltd. 151 Wardour Street, London W1V4BN.
15. Paul N. Balchin, Jeffrey L. Kieve. Urban Land Economics. The Macmillan Press Ltd, London and Basingtoke, 1982.
16. Willian Solesbury - Policy in Urban Planning, Pergomon Press. Oxford, New York, Jonto Sydney.
17. Willie Mendis, Urbannisation and Urban Development USAID, Colombo.