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Programme of Events

THE DEPARTMENT OF URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING, UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, ENUGU CAMPUS

Presents

A 2-Day National Conference

Theme:

URBAN PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN THE NIGERIAN CONTEXT: FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

VENUE: University Of Nigeria Enugu Campus
Main Hall
DATE: September 10 – 11, 2008
TIME: 10 Am

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Rt Hon Dr. Festus Uzor
Commissioner for Lands and Housing, Enugu State
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CITY LANDSCAPE AND BEAUTIFICATION: 
FOCUS ON BILLBOARDS AS ELEMENT OF CITY LANDSCAPE

BY
Arc. Okey Nduka & Arc. Chinwe Sanu-Amobi
Department of Architecture
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Being Conference Paper presented at A-2 Day National Conference on Urban Planning and Environmental Issues in Nigeria Context from Theory to Practice at University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus
Main Hall

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City Planning Development Strategy

City Landscape and Beautification: Focus on Billboards as element of City Landscape

Abstract
The city landscape is made up of several elements which either add value to the overall city environment or throw the city into chaos. This paper focuses on billboards as element of city beautification, and its impact on the city landscape. It reviews the problems and prospects of billboards advertising in the city.
The concept of city planning and development is to create an organized, safe, habitable and beautiful environment that will encourage productivity and healthy living. Therefore, a lot of landscape elements are proposed at the planning stage of cities. A city, according to Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, is "an inhabited place of greater size, population, or importance than a town or village. It is usually large or important municipality." City landscape is a picture representing a view of natural inland scenery or a particular area of activity.

The city landscape is composed of elements like buildings, road networks, parks, vegetation (lawns and trees), pedestrian walkways, billboards et cetera. These elements, when properly designed, organized and located/positioned, enhance movement, safety and the overall aesthetic of the city.

Billboards are large panels designed to carry out door advertising. They could be free standing erected by the roadside or attached to a building. They are landscape elements used for advertising/promoting products, an idea, service, pass messages on behalf of an institution, organization, campaigns (political) and describing directions. They come in various sizes depending on the operative planning regulations guiding the usage.

The focus of this paper is Enugu city. A brief background of the city will be done then discussion will be on the impact of billboards on Enugu city landscape, with a review of the problems and prospects of billboards advertising in the Enugu city.

Enugu City (Background)

The city of Enugu, located in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria, is situated at the foot of Udi plateau (Enugu Ngwo). It is accessed by road from Aha-Port Harcourt and Enugu-Enugu express roads and Abakaliki-Enugu road. Also the city can be accessed by railway and by air. The city, Enugu, was founded in 1909 after the discovery of coal deposits at Enugu Ngwo (Enugu). Microsoft® Student 2008 [DVD] Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation, 2007. This discovery, led to the building of Port Harcourt (Garden city). It's name "Enugu Ngwo" meaning 'at the top of the hill', comes from the traditional light (Bo) village of Enugu Ngwo on the plateau. Enugu was an administrative centre in 1912, headquarters (1939-31) of the Eastern provinces and the regional capital (1951-67) of Eastern Nigeria. Enugu used to be a major coal mining city and civil service enclave until attention was directed towards other sources of revenue earning ventures like petroleum and petroleum products marketing, pharmaceuticals, telecommunications, banking et cetera. There is the industrial estate in Enume where steel rods, asbestos cement products, and oxygen and acetylene gases are manufactured. Enugu has a railway workshop, an automobile...
assembly plant (ANAMCO), furniture and pottery factories (PRODA), sawmill and small textile and foodstuff enterprises. There is the Nkalagu cement factory. Enugu is an educational as well as a government and industrial centre. It is the site of the University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus (UNEC), Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT), Institute of Management and Technology (IMT) and Federal Training Centre (FTC). It has a state library, television (ESTV), radio (ESBS) and as well as national television (NYTA) and radio (FRCN). This new commercial status inspired a lot of advertisement, and consequently, the use of billboards in advertising products, passing on of information, political campaigns, etc.

Enugu municipality is made up of four Local Government Areas namely; Enugu North (Ogbete), Enugu South (Uwani), Enugu East (Nike) and Enugu Central (Ugwuaji). Currently, Enugu city is the capital of Enugu State of Nigeria.

Billboards: Categories and Uses.

Billboards are large panels designed to carry outdoor advertising (Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, Encyclopaedia Britannica 2005 Deluxe Edition). They are usually large in scale, made of durable material such as steel standoffs and sheets, timber posts and boards or tarpaulins.

Billboards are categorized according to size (display area), type (billposting or boarding or illuminated sign or sky sign or otherwise), and position (permanently fixed or moveable). There are the illuminated types, designed or adapted to be illuminated by artificial lighting, directly or by reflection and which is so illuminated for the purposes of advertisement; the fixed, free standing on its own support or affixed to a building; and the moveable/collapsible, displayed and dismantled on daily basis. They are used for different purposes for example:

- To give direction
- To advertise a product/products
- To communicate or announce information
- To advertise political or social campaigns

Direction description

Billboards as a landscape element used in describing direction, is often found stationed in strategic locations like gateways into states or cities, major roundabouts and road junctions. They are used as road guides for first time visitors entering a state or city, and for residents of the state or city to navigate their way within the state/city.
An example of illuminated billboard used to advertise a product and give direction. This serves dual purpose (direction and product advertising).

This is standing on the sidewalk as can be seen, a pedestrian is avoiding it.

An example of billboard used to give direction only.
Product advertising

Billboard used in advertising products could be seen along the highways leading into a state or city, major roundabouts and road junctions within and outside the city. Also, they could be seen mounted on building walls.

An example of billboard used to advertise a product only (above and below).
Billboard in China

Advertising is used throughout the world to promote the sale of products and services. This Chinese billboard advertises a brand of telephone card.

Information communication/announcement

Billboards used in communicating/passing on information for example, arrival to a state or city, is often found along highways leading to a state/city and within the city along major roads, junctions and near public buildings/facilities like, schools, hospitals et cetera.

Billboard for One-Child Families

A man and his child stand in front of a billboard that advocates a policy of one child per family in China. The Chinese government’s campaign for one-child families, along with its promotion of birth control and late marriages, has slowed the growth of China’s huge population.

Above is an example of billboard used to communicate information on family.

Political/Social Campaigns.

Billboard used for this purpose is seasonal. That is, it’s only seen during political activities to advertise the various political parties, their candidates and political agenda.
An example of billboard used in Political/Social Campaigns. The billboard below is fixed on the wall of a building in China.

Street Scene in Beijing, China
Beijing is the cultural heart of China. This street scene shows advertisements on walls and billboards for performing arts events as well as government policies. Beijing was also the location of the famous "Democracy Wall" and its so-called big-character posters that were banned in the late 1970s.

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Billboards: Landscape and Aesthetics Elements

Billboards as landscape and aesthetic elements should be attractive and interesting to look at! Generally, they should enhance and not destroy the aesthetics of the city. For this to be possible, established and authorized standards must be applied to achieve this. In the Control of Advertisements Edict No.7 of 1975, East Central State of Nigeria (now Enugu State), Gazette No.19 Vol.6, the following standards were established:

- Fixed billboards – display area not exceeding 5.57 sqm
- Fixed billboards – display area greater than 5.57 sqm but not exceeding 6.50 sqm
- Fixed billboards – display area greater than 6.50 sqm but not greater than 15.80 sqm
- Fixed billboards – display area greater than 15.80 sqm but not greater than 33.50 sqm
- Sky signs – on permanent post measuring 18.29 cm or above
- Illuminated signs – on permanent post measuring 18.29 cm or above
- Neon signs
- Wall billboards

An example of Wall billboards attached to a building.
An example of a movable billboard used to advertise products. This type is collapsible and built with light durable materials.

Another example of a wall billboard. The information on the billboard is clear and could be read from afar.
Billboards: Impact on the City Landscape

Billboards have both positive and negative impacts on the city landscape. For instance, when billboards are properly used, they enhance the general aesthetics of the city. Also, depending on the colours used in the making of the billboard adverts, a feeling of excitement or aggression could be created. Neon-signs and illuminated billboards create warm and beautiful city landscape at night and often times, serve as landmarks at night for residents and first time visitors to the city. On the other hand, when billboards are not properly used or the colours used in the making of the billboard adverts dete~ros or when authorized standards are not adopted in billboard advertising, confusion and a feeling of uneasiness is created. Also, the general aesthetics of the city is affected.

Control of Advertisement F.C.S.N. (now Erigan State) Edict No 7 of 1975. A25 Section 13(1) states: Where the advertisement permitted under this Edict becomes so snelled, defaced, damaged or in such a state that in the opinion of the council it constitutes a danger to the public safety, or injuriously affects the amenity or natural beauty of any part of the area of the council, the council may serve a notice on the person displaying the advertisement requiring him:

a. to remove or reprint the advertisement within sixty-eight days or
b. to carry out such other instruction within a specified time with respect to the advertisement as the council may think fit.
Billboards: Problems and Prospects

The problem of billboard advertising in the city is that when standards are not applied as stipulated by the regulatory body and regular monitoring as to whether these standards are adhered to by persons or organizations advertising are not done, the city landscape becomes chaotic and a nightmare!

There is the problem of obstruction of the smooth flow of traffic on the roads and in some cases, accidents because some motorists try to read billboards awkwardly positioned while driving. Also, some billboards are positioned stationed on road shoulders and sidewalks thereby obstructing pedestrian ways and roadside vehicular parking. This
disrupts both pedestrian and vehicular movements because vehicles are parked on the road instead of the road shoulders.

The problem of the colours used in preparing billboards is observed. Some billboards are done in uncomplimentary colours rather than warm and friendly colours. This affects the general feeling in the city environment. Warm and friendly colours exude warm and friendly environment, and people. The reverse is the case when uncomplimentary colours are used.

The size of the billboards is another problem observed. The display area of some billboards is so small that it makes it impossible to read the advertisement/information they carry. This makes them environmental nuisance instead of adding value to the city landscape. The essence of billboard advertising is to communicate/pas on information to the public and when this is not properly achieved, the whole exercise is defeated.

The problem of proper monitoring by the regulatory body is identified. The government has in place control edict regulating billboard advertising in the state but the problem is monitoring the proper use of billboards by persons or organizations involved in advertising. Section 13(1) of the Control of Advertisements Edict No.7, 1975 of E.C.S.N. (now Enugu State), sub head: Advertisement injurious to amenities or environment; clearly recommended the removal or renovation of any billboard deemed as soiled, defaced, damaged or in a state that in the opinion of the regulatory body constitutes a danger to the public safety, or injuriously affects the amenities or natural beauty of any part of the city/ environment, the regulatory body may serve a notice on the persons or organizations displaying the advertisement. This is as observed is not diligently carried out.

On the other hand, the prospects of billboard advertising enhancing the city landscape is very bright if only conscious efforts are made by both the regulatory body to diligently monitor billboard advertising in the city and the persons/organizations advertising adhering to or obeying the Edict regulating billboard advertising in the city. The city landscape will be orderly, the environment warm, friendly and exciting.
An example of billboards confusion. They are of various sizes, positioned on sidewalk and road shoulder. Note, the woman above is standing on the road while the okada man is squatting on the road shoulder thus exposing themselves to the danger of car accident.

This scene above and below is a display of confusion of billboards. Some of the billboards are collapsing; some positioned awkwardly that information on them is difficult to read, and they are of different sizes and colours. It is chaotic!
A chaotic scene of billboards. Most of them are positioned on the sidewalk and road shoulder.

An example of billboards that are poorly constructed. The height from the ground to the base of the display panel is not up to 1.0m thus the possibility of being covered by grass as seen above and below.
An example of billboard with deteriorated colour. Such ought to be removed or renovated.

An example of a well positioned billboard along the road. The billboards are not on the sidewalks or road shoulders, information on them could easily be read from afar, the colours on them are natural and complement the environment.
An example of billboard that is well built and positioned off the road and sidewalk. Also information on it could be read from afar and the colours, complimentary to the environment.
An example of well built and positioned billboards. The distance between billboards are good enough to enable motorists to read the information on them.

**Recommendations**

- Conscious effort should be made by the regulatory body to monitor the activities of persons and organizations involved in billboard advertising in the city regularly. This will help to check on time, the decay of the city landscape.
- Billboards should be constructed with durable materials (steel stanchions and panels) and positioned at least about 3.60 m away from the road. This will prevent possible collapse, obstruction of sidewalks and roadside parking.
- Billboards when constructed should have at least a height of about 3.60 m from the ground to the bottom of the display panel and positioned in such a way that motorists could read the information on the billboard from afar without causing any road mishap.
- The colours used in billboard advertising should be warm natural colours (green, blue, brown, red, white or grey) that will compliment the environment and the city landscape.
Cities are built in order to accommodate the ever growing human population. In doing so, some guidelines are put in place to consciously direct the desired growth. This is because man in building cities to meet his needs, wished to create a comfortable, warm, aesthetically pleasing and friendly environment that will enable him maximize his potentials. Disorderliness and confusion therefore, should not be allowed or encouraged. The elements (billboards) introduced in city landscape should add value and not destroy the overall city aesthetic. Especially, at a time like this when the Enugu State government is spending huge resources to give the city a new and befitting look. All stakeholders must be able to play their own role.

Reference