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# Challenges of Housing Estate Development: A Case Study of Brownwood Estate, Awka, Anambra State

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## *Abstract*

Housing remains one of the most basic needs of man. It ranks immediately after clothing. In Awka the demand for housing is constantly above the supply as a result of continuous influx of people into the city. Brownwood Estate was developed to increase the supply of housing in Awka. The interest of this work is to bring to limelight some of the challenges encountered in the development of Brownwood Estate and the applicable solutions to those challenges from the planning stage to the execution stage which entails; idea development, sourcing of fund, land acquisition, site and service scheme and marketing of the estate.

**Keywords:** Challenges, Development, Housing Estate, Brownwood Estate, Awka.

## *Introduction*

Property development is the systematic and strategic process of transforming raw land or existing properties into improved and financially viable assets through a series of activities that encompass land acquisition, feasibility studies, planning, design, financing, construction, marketing, and sales or leasing.

Property development, as a subset of the real estate industry, revolves around the enhancement and utilization of these properties. It involves a comprehensive and systematic approach to create new or improve existing structures, aligning them with market demands and societal needs. Property developers undertake extensive research, analysis, and planning to identify opportunities, assess risks, and determine the feasibility of projects.

The challenges that comes with housing estate development is not only that of finance but inclusive of challenges such as land acquisition, planning etc. It is to this end that this work intend to discuss some of these challenges and possible solutions to the challenges using Brownwood Estate located at Awka Millenium City Layout, Awka, Anambra State as a case study.

**Description of Brownwood Estate**

Brownwood Estate, located in Agu-Awka, a residential neighbourhood at the heart of Awka city, serves as a remarkable case study in tackling the persistent issue of low housing supply in the area. Awka, the capital of Anambra State, has experienced rapid urbanization and population growth, resulting in a pressing need for adequate and affordable housing options for its residents.

Recognizing this challenge, the developers of Brownwood Estate took a proactive approach to bridge the housing supply gap. The estate was meticulously designed to provide quality residential units that cater to the diverse housing needs of the local population. By strategically locating the estate in Agu-Awka, a well-established residential area, Brownwood Estate seamlessly integrates with the existing community, enhancing its attractiveness and accessibility.

The primary objective of Brownwood Estate is to offer a range of housing solutions that meet the evolving preferences and affordability levels of prospective homeowners. The estate incorporates a mix of housing types, including single-family homes, apartments, and duplexes, providing options for individuals, families, and professionals alike. The thoughtful design and construction of these units ensure modern amenities, functional layouts, and aesthetic appeal.

**Residential Property**

Residential property refers to real estate that is primarily used for residential purposes, providing living spaces for individuals, families, or households. It encompasses various types of housing units, including single-family homes, apartments, condominiums, townhouses, and residential complexes.

Residential properties play a crucial role in meeting the basic human need for shelter and serve as a fundamental component of the housing market. These properties are designed and built to provide comfortable and functional living environments, incorporating amenities and features that cater to the needs and preferences of residents.

According to Jiayi (2021), Residential property encompasses various housing types and serves as a vital component of the housing market. It provides shelter and living spaces for individuals and families, contributing to their well-being and quality of life. Residential properties can be a:

- Duplex
- Block of flats
- Bungalow
- Tenement
- Terrace
- Maisonette

**Property Development**

Property development is the process of transforming land or existing properties into valuable assets through planning, construction, and improvement. It involves various stages, including land acquisition, feasibility studies, design, financing, construction, and ultimately the sale or lease of the developed property.

Property developers play a central role in identifying opportunities, assessing market demand, and executing development projects. They undertake extensive research and analysis to determine the viability and profitability of a proposed development. This includes evaluating factors such as location, market trends, zoning regulations, and potential risks. Bortha et al (2014).

Once a project is deemed feasible, property developers engage in detailed planning, which involves conceptualizing the design, layout, and amenities of the development. They collaborate with architects, engineers, and other professionals to create comprehensive development plans and obtain necessary permits and approvals.

**Professionals Involved in Property Development**

Property development involves the collaboration of various professionals with specialized expertise and roles. These professionals contribute their knowledge and skills to ensure the successful planning, execution, and completion of development projects. Here are some key professionals commonly involved in property development:

a. **Property Developers**: Property developers are the driving force behind development projects. They identify opportunities, conduct market research, secure financing, manage the overall development process, and make strategic decisions to bring the project to fruition.

b. **Architects**: Architects play a crucial role in property development by designing the physical structures and spaces. They translate the vision and requirements of the project into detailed plans, ensuring functionality, aesthetics, and adherence to building codes and regulations.

c. **Planners**: Urban planners or town planners contribute to property development by assessing the social, economic, and environmental impacts of proposed projects. They consider factors such as zoning regulations, land use policies, infrastructure requirements, and community needs to ensure sustainable and well-designed developments.

d. **Engineers**: Structural engineers, civil engineers, and other engineering professionals are involved in property development to ensure the soundness and integrity of the structures. They provide expertise in areas such as foundation design, utility systems, drainage, and construction management.

e. **Quantity Surveyors**: Quantity surveyors are responsible for cost estimation and financial management throughout the development process. They assess project costs, prepare budgets, monitor expenses, and ensure that the project remains within the allocated budget.

f. **Project Managers**: Project managers oversee the overall coordination and execution of property development projects. They manage timelines, resources, stakeholders, and project teams to ensure smooth implementation and successful completion.

g. **Real Estate Agents/Brokers**: Real estate agents or brokers play a role in marketing and sales or leasing of developed properties. They assist in promoting the properties, identifying potential buyers or tenants, negotiating contracts, and facilitating transactions.

h. **Lawyers**: Legal professionals specializing in real estate provide crucial guidance on legal aspects of property development. They handle contracts, permits, title searches, zoning issues, and ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

i. **Financial Experts**: Financial experts, including financial analysts, lenders, and investors, contribute their expertise to property development by assessing project feasibility, providing funding, analyzing financial risks, and ensuring the financial viability of the development.

j. **Construction Professionals**: Construction professionals, such as contractors, builders, and subcontractors, are involved in the physical construction and implementation of the development project. They are responsible for executing the plans, managing construction processes, and ensuring quality and safety.

The collaboration of these professionals ensures that property development projects are planned, designed, financed, and constructed efficiently, resulting in successful and sustainable developments that meet market demand and add value to the built environment.

**Challenges Encountered in the Development of Brownwood Estate**

Interaction with the developers of Brownwood Estate exposed some of the challenges they encountered in the course of the development of Brownwood housing estate which are discussed below.

a. **Problem of Land Availability and Acquisition**:

Securing suitable land for development was a significant challenge. Increasing urbanization, limited land availability, and competing interests made it difficult to find viable development sites. The developers faced the task of identifying and acquiring land that meets the project's requirements within the constraints of the market and regulatory environment.

b. **The Challenge of Bureaucratic Bottleneck at the Ministries:**

Often time the delay encountered at the ministries during the process of legal search**,** application for relevant approvals and registration of title document can be overwhelming.

c. **The Problem of Land Fraudulent Practices**:

It is a common practice in most cities and towns in Anambra State that when you want to carry out any form of development on land, non-state actors who parade as either community youths or touts would come and disrupt the development process, making demands of huge amount of money and in some cases they would even destroy any development done on the land. Some community call this fee development levy. Often time, different groups will come and make demand of the same development levy thereby delaying the development process and sometimes increasing the total cost of development because at every stage of development you must pay them. This was part of the challenges faced by the developers during the course of developing Brownwood estate.

d. **Problem of Financing:**
One of the major challenges encountered during the process was that of finance, due to huge finance required for the development of such estate, at times lack of finance delayed the project for some period.

**e. Project Management Challenge:**
Challenges encountered which were related to project management were delay by labourers and suppliers of materials, cost overruns, and disputes often arises on site between Engineers and labourers or labourers and fellow labourers.

**Solutions to Challenges Encountered in Property Development**
Below are the approaches which were suggested as solution to the challenges of property development.

a. **Solution to Problem of Land Availability and Acquisition:** create relationship with landowners, developers, and real estate agents to gain access to potential development sites. By networking within the industry and actively engaging with these stakeholders, the developers gained access to potential development sites that may not be publicly available. Regular communication and fostering trust are key to securing favorable land acquisition opportunities.
b. **Solution to the Challenge of Bureaucratic Bottleneck at the Ministries:** Fostering relationship with ministries officials to facilitate smooth approval processes. developing positive relationships with the workers at the ministries which helped streamline the approval process for development projects.
c. **Solution to the Problem of Land Fraudulent Practices:** Engagement of security personnel on site helped reduce the fraudulent land practices. It gave workers the security confidence to go on with their work without any fear of threat to their lives and properties.
d. **Solution to the Problem of Financing:** the developers built strong relationships with financial institutions and explore different financing options. they cultivated relationships with banks, financial institutions, and private lenders to access diverse financing options. Building trust and demonstrating a track record of successful projects increases the likelihood of securing favorable financing terms.
e. **Solution to the Project Management Challenge:** Whenever conflict arises on site the best approach is to engage all the parties involved in peaceful conflict resolution mechanism. This is because conflict not well managed is capable of hindering the success of the project.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

### Conclusion

Shelter ranks third in the basic need of man after food and clothing, this need is what Brownwood estate was designed to satisfy. The challenges of housing estate development is not impossible to overcome . The importance of developing housing units and creating site and service schemes to solve the problem of low housing supply in Awka is a benefit viable enough to spur the desire to face and overcome any challenge likely to be faced by developers in housing estate development.

### Recommendations

1. **Prepare comprehensive and compelling business plans and financial projections to attract investors**: Investors are more likely to support a property development project when presented with a well-prepared business plan and financial projections. Property Developers should create robust business plans that outline the project's objectives, market analysis, revenue projections, and risk assessment. A thorough and professional approach enhances the project's attractiveness to potential investors.
2. **Engage the services of financial experts or consultants to navigate complex funding processes**: Seeking the expertise of financial experts or consultants specializing in property development financing can help Developers navigate complex funding processes. These professionals can provide guidance on structuring financing deals, preparing investment proposals, and negotiating terms with lenders or investors.
3. **Employ experienced project managers to oversee construction activities and ensure efficient coordination:** A skilled project manager plays a critical role in successful construction projects. Property Developers should engage experienced and competent project managers who possess strong organizational and leadership skills. These professionals will oversee construction activities, coordinate with contractors and subcontractors, and ensure adherence to project timelines and budgets.
4. **Develop detailed project schedules, budgets, and risk management plans**: Proper planning and effective project management are essential for overcoming construction challenges. Estate Surveyors and Valuers should create comprehensive project schedules that outline critical milestones and allocate resources effectively. They should also develop realistic budgets and regularly monitor costs to avoid budget overruns.
5. **Conduct thorough due diligence early in the development process to identify potential regulatory hurdles**: Undertaking comprehensive due diligence before initiating a development project is crucial. Estate Surveyors and Valuers should

conduct thorough site investigations, including title searches, environmental assessments, and infrastructure feasibility studies. This early assessment helps identify any potential regulatory challenges and allows for appropriate planning and risk management.

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